The Dissertation Committee for Roberto Joseph De Luca Certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

Liberal Multiculturalism and the Challenge of Religious Diversity

Committee:

Juliet Hooker, Supervisor

Thomas L. Pangle

Jeffrey K. Tulis

Devin Stauffer

Hugh Donald Forbes

Liberal Multiculturalism and the Challenge of Religious Diversity

by

Roberto Joseph De Luca, B.A.; M.A.

Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

December 2010

To my parents

Liberal Multiculturalism and the Challenge of Religious Diversity

Publication No._____

Roberto Joseph De Luca, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2010

Supervisor: Juliet Hooker

This dissertation evaluates the recent academic consensus on liberal multiculturalism. I argue that this apparent consensus, by subsuming religious experience under the general category of culture, has rested upon undefended and contestable conceptions of modern religious life. In the liberal multicultural literature, cultures are primarily identified as sharing certain ethnic, linguistic, or geographic attributes, which is to say morally arbitrary particulars that can be defended without raising the possibility of conflict over metaphysical beliefs. In such theories, the possibility of conflict due to diverse religious principles or claims to the transcendent is either steadfastly ignored or, more typically, explained away as the expression of perverted religious faith. I argue that this conception of the relation between culture and religion fails to provide an account of liberal multiculturalism that is persuasive to religious believers on their own terms. To illustrate this failing, I begin with an examination of the Canadian policy of official multiculturalism and the constitutional

design of Pierre Trudeau. I argue that the resistance of Québécois nationalists to liberal multiculturalism, as well as the conflict between the Québécois and minority religious groups within Quebec, has been animated by religious and quasi-religious claims to the transcendent. I maintain that to truly confront this basic problem of religious difference, one must articulate and defend the substantive visions of religious life that are implicit in liberal multicultural theory. To this end, I contrast the portrait of religious life and secularization that is implicit in Will Kymlicka's liberal theory of minority rights with the recent account of modern religious life presented by Charles Taylor. I conclude by suggesting that Kymlicka's and Taylor's contrasting conceptions of religious difference—which are fundamentally at odds regarding the relation of the right to the good, and the diversity and nature of genuine religious belief—underline the extent to which liberal multicultural theory has reached an academic consensus only by ignoring the reality of religious diversity.

Table of Contents

Introduction

In the past two decades, contemporary political theory has reached an apparent consensus regarding the harmony between liberalism and multiculturalism.[1] Above all, this consensus purports to reconcile liberal theory with the political necessity of achieving liberalism through cultural groups, including groups which demand special protections. According to this consensus, traditional liberalism's focus upon the individual and individual rights has proven too abstract when measured against the practice of liberalism. Hence, the prevalence of liberal claims made by ethnic minorities, and the success of such claims in buttressing the practice of liberalism, is viewed as crucial evidence in demonstrating the compatibility of liberalism and multiculturalism.

My aim is to challenge this prevailing consensus by demonstrating that the contemporary liberal multicultural literature has achieved a theoretical consensus only by ignoring the challenge that religious diversity poses to liberal multiculturalism. According to the dominant liberal multicultural outlook, a system of group rights to protect cultural diversity can and should be defended insofar as individuals primarily realize their own good through cultural or ethnic groups. However, in order to arrive at this positive endorsement of cultural and ethnic groups, liberal multiculturalism confines itself to a restrictive view of culture. Most importantly, cultures are identified as sharing certain ethnic, linguistic, or geographic attributes, which is to say morally arbitrary

[1] As Will Kymlicka has argued, this consensus begins to take shape in the early 1990s ("An Emerging Consensus?" 147). Articles and books published in this time frame and viewed as falling within this burgeoning liberal multicultural consensus include Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture* (1989), Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (1990), Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition" (1992), Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship* (1995), Philips, *The Politics of Presence* (1995), and Raz, "Multiculturalism: A Liberal Perspective" (1995).

particulars that can be defended without raising the possibility of conflict over metaphysical beliefs. The problem, however, is that such accounts frequently assume that religious commitments do not constitute the most profound cultural attachments for large and relevant numbers of people. The possibility of conflict due to diverse religious principles is either steadfastly ignored or, more typically, explained away as the expression of perverted religious faith. In sum, behind the claims of a liberal multicultural consensus is a particular conception of religion. As I will argue, engaging this often only implicit conception of religion leads to a fuller and richer debate regarding the proper aims and aspirations of liberal multiculturalism as well as a fuller and richer account of the challenges still facing liberal multiculturalism.

That religious groups might pose a problem for the liberal multicultural consensus is not, of course, a novel suggestion. Most notably, the problem religion poses to theories of group rights can be discerned in the resistance of some contemporary liberals to the liberal multicultural consensus. Brian Barry, exemplifying such critiques, notes the way in which liberal multiculturalism provides rhetorical and political cover for religious groups seeking to preserve profoundly illiberal practices.[2] For instance, the Amish practices of "shunning" excommunicated members and pressuring parents to either enroll their children in Amish schools or face excommunication—condemning the children to an education in farm or domestic work—are potentially protected or excused by arguments for "cultural diversity" (*Culture and Equality* 189-191; 207-208). The Amish educational system can be defended, for instance, as providing an alternative to "modern

[2] For an example of the tension between multiculturalism and liberal feminism, and the importance of religious groups for seeing this tension, see Okin. For an example of the tension between liberal multiculturalism and religion, see O'Neill.

values."[3] Yet, Amish practices, Barry argues, do not ensure diversity at all. Religious conformity among the Amish ensures that the right of exit comes at social and economic costs too dear for most members to pay, thereby robbing the members of the Amish community of the capacity or freedom to pursue diverse life choices (*Culture and Equality* 242-244). In short, ostensibly "voluntary" religious associations can often use the defense of cultural diversity to support limiting and illiberal goals. In this way, Barry argues, liberal multiculturalism detracts from the efforts of liberal egalitarians to compel illiberal religious groups to meet liberal standards of freedom of association.

When forced to confront the reality of strong religious minorities, it is difficult to deny the force of Barry's argument. However, Barry's critique of Amish practices is also indicative of the way in which the "problem of religion" can be used to foreclose, rather than to explore, the questions which are raised by liberal multicultural theory and practice. The question Barry refuses to take up in any serious manner, despite its obvious relevance, is why there has been such a recent flourishing of cultural and religious politics and academic literature on "liberal multiculturalism." Might we have something to learn from our recent obsession with multiculturalism and its various guises? Rather than explore such questions, Barry relies upon a dismissive and flippant response: the so-called liberal multicultural consensus is merely the product of like-minded academics, antecedently convinced of the multiculturalist cause (*Culture and Equality* 6). Instead of probing the possible limitations of liberal practice, Barry proclaims that the political complaints of multiculturalists are exceptions to a political system that generally deals

[3] The freedom to reject modern ways of life on religious grounds is the heart of the defense of Amish educational practices in the landmark case Wisconsin v. Yoder, 406 U.S. 205 (1972). Barry's critique, of course, rests on the argument that the case was wrongly decided, a mistake that is exacerbated by contemporary appeals for the protection of cultural and religious diversity. The issue of the proper relation between liberalism and "pre-modern" religion is discussed in Chapter 1.

with problems of diversity quite well, particularly when egalitarians are committed to a common political cause.[4]

In the following chapters, I argue that these "exceptions" pose genuine challenges to liberal practice. What Barry and contemporary liberals often fail to take seriously is the legitimate concern that liberalism is only compatible with a certain range of cultures or religious forms. Moreover, the principles that define this range—the framework of liberalism itself—foster and embody aspirations which are more substantive than the apparently formal ideals of freedom and fairness. For instance, Barry's critique ignores the larger phenomenon of the homogenization of cultures that takes place through liberalization, such as the transformative requirement that religions respect the distinction between public and private. Instead, Barry dismissively suggests that any such homogenization is the result of the preservation of cultures compatible with freedom and the rejection of cultures incompatible with it. Yet, if we know the effect of liberalism is to promote certain ways of life, and to discourage others, is it intellectually honest to claim that liberal egalitarianism is neutral on cultural and religious questions?

Thus, contrary to both the liberal multicultural consensus and the liberal critiques of this consensus, my goal is to demonstrate that the "problem of religion" goes beyond the political question of whether liberalism requires the accommodation of majority or minority religious groups. What has been largely unexplored in the liberal multicultural literature is the extent to which liberal multiculturalism provides, through its implicit assumptions regarding modernization and secularization, a transformative vision of

[4] For a liberal multiculturalist reply to Barry on this question, see Chandran Kukathas, "The Life of Brian, or Now For Something Completely Difference-Blind," especially 193-194. As Kukathas points out, Barry's critique of multiculturalism consistently relies upon undefended assumptions regarding the falsity of religious claims.

religious life. Engaging these assumptions regarding modernization and secularization leads one beyond an illustration of the problem religious groups pose to liberal practice to an appreciation of the vision of human life which is presupposed by liberal multiculturalism. As we shall see, the persuasiveness of liberal multiculturalism, as an improvement upon strict liberalism, turns on a decisive question: does liberal multiculturalism allow for the flourishing of diverse forms of moral or religious life?

Outline of the Work

I begin the dissertation with an analysis of Canadian multiculturalism. This starting point is most obviously relevant as the means to assessing liberal multiculturalism's claim to reconcile abstract liberal theory with the actual practice of liberalism. The choice of Canada in particular is relatively straightforward. Canada is at the forefront of liberal multicultural theory for a number of reasons: it has officially endorsed multiculturalism; it contains a geographically concentrated and linguistically distinct minority, which has sought and at times obtained political rights; and, finally, it contains a significant aboriginal population which faces the real possibility of cultural extinction and which has itself obtained significant group rights. In Chapter 1, I argue that the fundamental importance of Canada's official policy of liberal multiculturalism lies in its attempt to realize a novel and thoroughly modern form of political life. Moreover, I argue that the most persuasive articulation of this project is not to be found in the contemporary liberal multicultural literature but in thought and actions of Pierre Trudeau. Few, if any, Canadian Prime Ministers have been as influential as Trudeau, yet

the intellectual foundation of his constitutional reforms are often underestimated. I argue that Trudeau's constitutional design, including its constitutional protections for multiculturalism and individual rights, was meant to vindicate the liberal individual as the true locus of sovereignty. However, I also maintain that the contemporary resistance to Canadian multiculturalism, particularly from the direction of Québécois nationalism, represents a radical challenge to the liberal conception of the self and its ability to provide a convincing account of our moral and spiritual lives.

To illustrate this contemporary challenge to Trudeau's liberal multiculturalism, I turn to the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor. According to Taylor, the Québécois' desire to preserve their language and culture beyond their lifetimes is evidence of the persistence of the transcendent in liberal politics. For Taylor, then, liberalism has rested upon, and must rest upon, the affirmation of collective goals which transcend the individual. Thus, Taylor's argument for the necessity of the transcendent implicitly raises the question of the proper role or scope of religion in liberal political life. More fundamentally, however, Taylor's challenge underlines the extent to which this traditional problem must confront a more basic question regarding the nature of genuine or authentic religious belief in the contemporary age. Does an affirmation of the transcendent lead to a defense of religion and religious groups in public life? If so, does modern religious life somehow escape the problems of exclusiveness and intolerance which have often plagued pre-modern religion, and which have made it the subject of liberal criticisms?

In Chapters 2 and 3, I turn to evaluating the contemporary arguments regarding a liberal multicultural consensus. As intimated above, this consensus purports to resolve

the tensions between liberalism and religious diversity which are evident in the Canadian example. I begin Chapter 2 by challenging Will Kymlicka's claim that there has been a progression from the liberal-communitarian debates to a contemporary liberal culturalist consensus. Kymlicka's articulation of the consensus is particularly important insofar as it has come to define the terms and nature of this consensus. Contra Kymlicka, I argue that the apparent progression in these debates has often represented a failure or unwillingness to confront challenges and limits to liberal theory which were revealed in the original liberal-communitarian debate. Through an analysis of two of the central figures of this debate—John Rawls and Michael Sandel—I demonstrate that religion increasingly revealed itself to be at the core of what was at stake in the debates over liberalism and community. Specifically, I argue that the primary, and unresolved, point of contention between Rawls and Sandel turns out to be the status of claims which transcend the individual, i.e., the fundamental issue which has animated Canada's most recent constitutional crisis.

In Chapter 3, I argue that Kymlicka's liberal theory of minority rights, which has been foundational for the liberal multicultural consensus, fails to address the problems which arose in the Rawls-Sandel exchange. In particular, I suggest that Kymlicka's defense of cultural rights, as providing a context of choice wherein individuals may realize their life choices, assumes a standard of right which is independent of particular cultures and religions, thereby circumscribing the limits and nature of religious belief and practices. I also contend that the plausibility of Kymlicka's account rests upon a largely unstated account of modernity, which views modernization and the secularization it entails as the liberation of the individual from earlier confining horizons, including the

confining horizons of archaic or pre-modern religions. Whatever the virtues of this liberal account of the self, Kymlicka fails to confront the "communitarian" arguments which have been leveled against it. To illustrate this problem, and its significance for understanding the challenge religious diversity poses to liberal multiculturalism, I return to the thought of Taylor. In contrast to Kymlicka, Taylor suggests that liberalism is itself a particular cultural aspiration, one which has been constituted by its religious traditions. I conclude Chapter 3 by arguing that Kymlicka and Taylor, perhaps the two most prominent articulators of "liberal multiculturalism," are fundamentally at odds because of their contrasting interpretation of religion, thereby undermining the notion of a contemporary consensus.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I turn to an extended discussion of Taylor. I justify my emphasis on Taylor by noting Taylor's uniqueness among the most prominent theorists associated with multiculturalism. Most significantly, Taylor is a theist whose work has been devoted to understanding the place of religion in "a secular age." In Chapter 4, I illustrate how Taylor's work on moral realism naturally leads to questions regarding the nature of secularization. I begin by attempting to establish the sources of Taylor's culturalist moral realism, arguing that Taylor's critique of disengagement and naturalism, by showing the limitations of natural science in apprehending human affairs, is what makes Taylor's account of culturalist moral realism possible. Moreover, Taylor's phenomenological argument for realism leads to the realization that modern appeals to "difference" and the failings of exclusive humanism are more significant phenomena than the natural science model would lead one to expect; they are not merely illusions projected upon a more fundamental reality, but constitutive aspects of human reality. I

conclude by arguing that Taylor's optimism regarding our ability to affirm difference on realist grounds raises the question of the relation between Taylor's ostensibly secular account of philosophy and his Catholic religious commitments: does Taylor's account of culturalist moral realism assume a harmony between diverse cultural goods and aspirations that is not warranted by the empirical evidence, but might be justified on religious grounds?

In Chapter 5, I attempt to address this question through a sympathetic exposition of Taylor's turn, late in his academic career, to the phenomenon of secularization, arguing that Taylor's account of the "long march" to a secular age helps reveal the assumptions underlying contemporary discussions of liberal multiculturalism. Most notably, Taylor's identification of the contemporary secular age, as one that is accompanied by profound doubt regarding the good for believers and unbelievers alike, helps explain liberal multiculturalism's insistence that modern politics demands openness to a diversity of cultural and religious groups. However, I also contend that Taylor presents a contestable and theological portrait of political theory and its relation to practice. This theological portrait of political theory, I argue, is particularly evident in Taylor's insistence that neither religious nor areligious accounts are able to resolve the most fundamental human questions and dilemmas. This insistence must assume that exclusive humanist accounts, which attempt to provide a universally valid account of human nature, are bound to fail. I conclude that a true response to Taylor's novel contribution to the liberal multicultural debates does not consist in arriving at politically workable models of liberal multiculturalism, nor in settling upon the correct meaning of liberalism, the two principal aims of liberals such as Kymlicka and Barry. Rather, a true

response to Taylor requires a discussion of the limits and purposes of political theory—the kind of question that has been largely off limits to contemporary advocates of liberalism and liberal multiculturalism.

Chapter 1

Liberal Multiculturalism and the Canadian Experiment

Liberal multiculturalism has been a dominant theme in contemporary theory, and no country has been more significant in discussions of liberal multiculturalism than Canada. Canada's official endorsement of multiculturalism and its commitment to group rights have been held in especially high regard. Contemporary theorists of liberal multiculturalism, impressed by Canada's embrace of ethnic diversity, have largely endorsed the "Canadian model" of official multiculturalism and group rights as an exemplary form of accommodating ethnic diversity.

My overriding thesis is that the academic approach to the Canadian model has emphasized multiculturalism as a domestic policy to the exclusion of its more fundamental importance as a vision of modernity itself. By focusing upon official multiculturalism as a means of accommodating ethnic diversity, contemporary theorists have largely ignored Canada's attempt at being a "brilliant prototype for the moulding of tomorrow's civilization" (Trudeau, "New Treason of the Intellectuals" 179).[1] However, Canada's global significance, as an attempt to demonstrate the viability of modern liberal government in a pluralistic world, and to integrate diverse citizens into a truly heterogeneous Confederation, has arguably been defined as much by its failings as its successes. Accordingly, I will argue that the significance of Canada's liberal multicultural constitutional design is, in part, its failure to overcome the fundamental

[1] This focus of contemporary theory is best represented by the most prominent theorist of liberal multiculturalism, Will Kymlicka. For instance, see *Multicultural Citizenship*, which is primarily concerned with elaborating a liberal theory of group rights. The significance of Kymlicka's thought for understanding the contemporary liberal multicultural consensus is elaborated upon in Chapter 3.

challenges to liberal multiculturalism which it was originally intended to dispel: nationalism and the claims to the transcendent often invoked in nationalist politics. In order to show what has been at stake in Canadian constitutional politics over the last half century, I will focus on the two political and intellectual figures who have presented the most penetrating and comprehensive visions of Canada as a vision of modernity: Pierre Elliott Trudeau and Charles Taylor.

The importance of Pierre Trudeau's role in modern Canadian politics—as Prime Minister of Canada (1968-1979 and 1980–1984) and as an accomplished public intellectual—is difficult to underestimate. Most notable, however, is Trudeau's role in reconstituting the Canadian regime according to a novel liberal multicultural design. According to Trudeau, the questions concerning modernity that could be resolved through his constitutional project rival the significance of the American achievements of two centuries previous. In both cases, countries possessed ideal conditions for the flourishing of a particular form of government—republicanism and polyethnic liberalism, respectively—and failure to achieve this form of government could represent the impossibility of this form of government altogether.[2] Specifically, Trudeau saw Canada

[2] In the American case, the stronger form of this argument—that the possibility of republican government rested with the American experiment—is most clearly articulated by Publius in the opening words of *Federalist* 1:

> After an unequivocal experience of the inefficacy of the subsisting federal government, you are called upon to deliberate on a new Constitution for the United States of America. The subject speaks its own importance; comprehending in its consequences nothing less than the existence of the UNION, the safety and welfare of the parts of which it is composed, the fate of an empire in many respects the most interesting in the world. It has been frequently remarked that it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend for their political constitutions on accident and force. If there be any truth in the remark, the crisis at which we are arrived may with propriety be regarded as the era in which that decision is to be made; and a wrong election of the part we shall act may, in this view, deserve to be considered as the general misfortune of mankind. (27)

as a forerunner to a cosmopolitan world government or federation of such governments, which would protect cultures insofar as, and only insofar as, they promoted individuals' capacity for genuine freedom of choice. As the original architect of the Canadian experiment, Trudeau possessed particular insight into the conditions of Canadian multiculturalism, and its truly grand and forward-looking ambitions. Thus, an analysis of Trudeau's political design clarifies the idealistic and moral hopes which would soon animate Canada's constitutional project.

Charles Taylor has long been Canada's most prominent living philosopher. Moreover, Taylor has frequently been active in Canadian politics, both as a political actor, and as an intellectual commenting on Canadian politics.[3] Thus, an analysis of Taylor's interpretation of Canadian multiculturalism would seem to require little defense. What is often overlooked in discussions of Taylor's thought, however, is the extent to which Taylor's various comments on Canadian politics must be nested within his account of modernity. Taylor, like Trudeau, has arguably viewed Canada as representative of the future of modern liberalism, and as a comprehensive vision of the direction of modern liberal government. Yet, unlike Trudeau, Taylor's account of the rise of the politics of recognition raises serious questions regarding the viability and theoretical foundations of Trudeau's anti-nationalist constitutional design. According to Taylor, genuine respect of cultural difference requires acknowledging the fact that modern cultures view cultural goods as social goods which transcend their usefulness to individual members, and as

---

Trudeau's account of the importance of the Canadian experiment as a decisive proof for, and future example of, polyethnic liberalism frequently echoes Publius' claims. For instance, see "New Treason" 177-181.

[3] For a sustained discussion of the importance of Taylor's political life for interpreting Taylor's philosophy as a whole, and its political implications, see Redhead, *Charles Taylor: Thinking and Living Deep Diversity*, and "Charles Taylor's Deeply Diverse Response to Canadian Fragmentation."

socials goods that require recognition in their unique particularity. Hence, Taylor's account of culture is crucial for understanding Canadian multiculturalism insofar as it challenges Trudeau's instrumental and universalizing defense of modern cultures. As we shall see (Chapters 2 and 3), this critique of Trudeau also poses problems for Trudeau's most important intellectual heir, Will Kymlicka.

I conclude by arguing that the true challenge to Trudeau's vision of liberal multiculturalism is the quasi-religious claims to the transcendent invoked by Québécois nationalists and articulated by Taylor through his account of irreducibly social goods. Implicit in Taylor's account is a two-fold faith: first, the belief that liberalism can be reconciled with the claims of recognition demanded by groups such as the Québécois; second, that the liberalization and secularization of cultures such as the Québécois will not eventually undermine their distinctness and desire to preserve their culture beyond their lifetimes. As we shall see, these challenges point to the pivotal issue of the relation between liberal multiculturalism and secularization, a problem that will be elaborated upon in later chapters.

Multiculturalism as Intentional Design

In contemporary Canada, the Canadian model has come to be seen as the defining statement regarding the possibility of multicultural government, a moral project with which all Canadians should identify. There are, of course, dissenters from this political culture, but multiculturalism, in spite of this opposition, is an established part of public life and public speech. The Canadian "mosaic" is now a national watchword, and a host

of public institutions and programs, including a national holiday celebrating Canada's multicultural heritage ("Multicultural Day"), devote themselves to facilitating cultural awareness and the smooth functioning of multiculturalism. An ideal that would have been largely unintelligible at the time of Confederation—the celebration of cultural diversity for its own sake—has become an essential part of Canada's popular and elite self-understandings; while critics may complain of the "cult of multiculturalism," even they must concede, as their starting point, the very real influence multiculturalism has had on the Canadian imagination.[4]

The prevailing academic view is that Canada's contemporary multicultural identity is not the product of a comprehensive and intentional liberal multicultural design, but the product of a fortuitous conjunction of causes.[5] According to this interpretation of Canada's liberal multicultural beginnings, Trudeau, the Prime Minister responsible for Canada's official endorsement of multiculturalism in 1971, viewed multiculturalism as a political tool that was to be cast aside once it was no longer politically necessary (McRoberts 126). In particular, multiculturalism, by recognizing the cultural equality of ethnic groups that did not identify with the English or French language, was a means of defusing the hostile reactions to Trudeau's passage of the Official Languages Act in 1969, which established French and English as the official languages of Canada. Trudeau's

[4] See Bisoondath, *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada*, which is perhaps the most popular critique of Canadian multiculturalism in Canada. Bisoondath's analysis is an apparent exception that proves the rule. While Bisoondath argues that multiculturalism is much less popular among the Canadian citizenry than it is in official circles, Bisoondath repeatedly recognizes the force—and sometimes, in his life spent opposing the Canadian multicultural creed, the wrath—of Canadian multiculturalism. In fact, this force is the animating concern of the book itself: "Multiculturalism is an emotional subject. It reaches into our past and our present, into the core of ourselves. It engages all that has shaped us. It touches us where we are the most vulnerable and the most self-protective….A subject so personal, one that cuts so close to the bone, defies objectivity. [This book] is, then, a personal attempt to grapple with a policy that, from my earliest days in this country, presented itself as a social cornerstone" (7). This is not, of course, to suggest that this identity is not oftentimes exaggerated. For an insightful discussion on this point, see Kymlicka, "Being Canadian."

[5] For instance, see Kymlicka, "The Canadian Model of Diversity."

multicultural rhetoric is thus explained away as mere political maneuverings. On this reading, then, official multiculturalism was of minor symbolic importance, and only later came to outstrip its inauspicious beginnings.

When intentional design is attributed to Trudeau, the interpretation of Trudeau's intentions is generally a negative one. A more radical critique of Trudeau's support of multiculturalism, often forwarded by Québécois nationalists, is that Trudeau's endorsement of official multiculturalism was designed to undercut the force of particular cultures' claims to special status in the Canadian Confederation.[6] Trudeau's specific target was French Canada's claim to distinct status; the recognition of all cultures as important for Canada's heritage undermined French Canada's more particular claims. Such critics also argue that Trudeau's ostensible aim was not to fortify cultures, but to weaken them. When coupled with the avoidance of substantial material support for robust multicultural policies, Trudeau's appeals to multiculturalism appear to be Trudeau's rhetorical cover for indirectly weakening the cultural goals pursued by groups such as the Québécois.

On both readings, then, contemporary Canada's deep attachment to multiculturalism seems to have flourished despite Trudeau's tepid support. In spite of the merits of the two interpretations raised above, I will argue that Trudeau intended the transformation of Canadian identity, and turned a fortuitous political moment into a world-historical political project.[7] To see how Trudeau might both intend a liberal-multicultural transformation of Canada, and avoid providing substantial material support for multicultural policies, it is necessary to keep in mind the necessarily long-term

[6] For instance, see Laforest.

[7] The following account of a third approach, and my understanding of Trudeau's liberal multiculturalism as a whole, is indebted to Forbes, "Trudeau as the First Theorist of Canadian Multiculturalism."

strategic considerations inherent in Trudeau's multicultural aims. Although Trudeau's actions as Prime Minister suggest that he was not overtly interested in celebrating our distinct cultural heritages, and our differences of dress, dance, and cuisine—what Stanley Fish has derided as "boutique multiculturalism"—this is not to suggest that Trudeau did not see such policies as the inevitable consequence of his political design. As we shall see, if one does not assume that Trudeau's writings and speeches were not mere rhetoric for official multiculturalism in which he did not put much faith, Trudeau's speeches and writings point to the concept of a liberal polyethnic state which is more comprehensive than the mere endorsement of "boutique multiculturalism," a political foundation that would, in turn, foster a Canadian multicultural identity and modern cultural programs and protections.

Unsurprisingly, then, Trudeau frequently emphasized the long-term nature of his project, and his great hopes for Canada, in his political writings. For instance, in one of his most remarkable passages, Trudeau clearly suggests that the Canadian embrace of multiculturalism could be a far grander project than the mere protection and recognition of diverse cultures:

> The die is cast in Canada: there are two main ethnic and linguistic groups, [British and French]; each is too strong and too deeply rooted in the past, too firmly bound to a mother-culture, to be able to engulf the other. But if the two will collaborate at the hub of a truly pluralistic state, Canada could become the envied seat of a form of federalism that belongs to tomorrow's world. Better than the American melting-pot, Canada could offer an example to all those new Asian and African states...who must discover how to govern their polyethnic populations with proper regard for justice and liberty....Canadian federalism is an experiment of major proportions; it could become a brilliant prototype for the moulding of tomorrow's civilization. ("New Treason" 178-179)

Such statements by Trudeau are evidence of his belief that the Canadian experiment portends to universal significance. The Canadian experiment, by providing a peaceful

microcosm of the full range of modern diversity, is meant to show the world that polyethnic liberalism could eventually be realized by all states. In short, Trudeau's establishment of a constitutional architecture for a liberal multicultural confederation was meant to ensure the flourishing of multiculturalism for later generations, a flourishing that required an extended reconstitution of the Canadian identity. Thus, official multiculturalism was only a small step in Canada's march towards the greater aim of creating a "truly pluralistic state."

Canadian Multiculturalism in Context

Trudeau's optimism for a truly pluralistic state must be understood in the context of the dramatic changes taking place in Canada during the 1960s. Quebec's Quiet Revolution, or the growth and transformation of nationalism within Quebec, was the most important of these changes. Pivotal to the Quiet Revolution was the provincial government's replacement of the Roman Catholic Church as the primary institution in key cultural areas; education and social welfare were no longer the domain of the Church, but of a secular state. This change had a profound effect upon the politicization of Quebec. Traditionally, Quebec rarely threatened separation from the Canadian Confederation. Quebec's Roman Catholic culture and institutions, which were generally hostile to substantial political participation, largely muted its desire and capacity for an overtly separatist political movement. Moreover, Quebec's Roman Catholic heritage also secured Quebec's distinctness, a distinctness that was jeopardized by the liberalization and secularization of the province. The possibility that liberalization and secularization

would lead to Anglo-Protestant cultural domination now posed a genuine threat. Thus, Quebec's rapid secularization in the 1960s, and the corresponding decline in a quietist political culture, raised serious questions regarding Quebec's future role in the Canadian Confederation. Could a politicized Québécois be accommodated within Canada? Or would Québécois nationalism, absent the depoliticizing and genuinely differentiating force of the Roman Catholic Church, necessarily lead to separation?

The federal government's initial response, begun by Liberal Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson in 1963, was to form the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. The Commission was the centerpiece of Pearson's strategy of recognizing Quebec's proper role in Canada by reinforcing Canadian dualism, the dominant interpretation of the purpose of Canadian federalism within Quebec.[8] According to dualism, Canada was founded by a compact between two peoples, French and British. On this view, Canadian federalism is, and always was, a means of protecting cultural aims, rather than economic or regional interests. Accordingly, the Commission's overarching mandate was "to inquire into and report on the existent state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races"; however, the Commission was also to take "into account the contribution made by other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada," a task that, while secondary, was essential to a principled policy of biculturalism (*Preliminary Report* 151). Hence, the terms of the Commission suggested that Quebec possesses a right to preserve and protect French Canadian culture in a way that was distinct from the other provinces.

[8] The following account of the importance of dualism draws from Taylor, *Reconciling the Solitudes*, especially Chapters 2, 4, and 7-9.

As evident in the mandate of the Commission, dualism is not the simple-minded claim that cultural diversity could or should be extinguished from modern states. Rather, the dualist claim is that a constitutional democracy is shaped by its founding cultures and their aspirations. Accordingly, such aspirations should be protected and reflected in a country's written or unwritten constitution. When a country is constituted by more than one major culture—such as British and French in the Canadian case—the solution is not cultural neutrality, but a partnership among the two cultures. This partnership might be founded with the acknowledgment of its debt to other cultures, yet such debts do not place all cultures on the same political or constitutional standing. According to the Commission, then, cultural neutrality can only be pursued by misunderstanding the cultural grounds of liberal constitutionalism.

Dualism, as the necessary partnership between Canada's two primary, but not sole, founding nations, was thus reflected throughout the language of the original Commission. For instance, the Commission was careful to define culture and cultural equality in such a way that cultural dualism, and not simply linguistic dualism, was preserved:

> Culture is a way of being, thinking, and feeling. It is a driving force animating a significant group of individuals united by a common tongue, and sharing the same customs, habits, and experiences. Clearly the two cultures designated in our terms of reference are those associated with the English and French languages in Canada. But as there are the two dominant languages, there are two principal cultures, and their influence extends, in greatly varying degrees, to the whole country. (*Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism* 1: xxxi)

The Commission went on to note that although cultures are changing and are capable of being lived in different ways, neither the French nor English Canadian culture could be reduced to the other. Thus, "just as bilingualism should not lead to a blend of two

languages, so Canada's cultural duality cannot be taken to mean a mixture of the two cultures; each has its own existence" (*Bilingualism and Biculturalism* 1: xxxi). In sum, the Commission consistently preserves a culturally dualistic understanding of Canada, while allowing for the compatibility of this understanding with cultural diversity more generally.

With this context in mind, Trudeau's arguments for multiculturalism can more easily come into view. In his October 8th, 1971 speech to the House of Commons, which was in direct reference to Volume IV of the Royal Commission, Trudeau designated Canada as an officially multicultural country. In addition to accepting all of the cultural reforms safeguarding the contribution of "other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada," Trudeau provided the justification for an official policy of multiculturalism. Trudeau's justification can be divided into two basic arguments: first, official multiculturalism advances the aims of the original Commission; second, multiculturalism advances the principles of individual freedom and fairness.

Trudeau began his speech by announcing that the government accepted all those recommendations of the Royal Commission regarding the "contribution by other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada and the measures that should be taken to safeguard that contribution" (*Debates* 8545). Significantly, however, Trudeau went on to state that it was the view of the Commission that there is no official culture in Canada, and that no ethnic group takes precedence over another:

> There cannot be one cultural policy for Canadians of British and French origin, another for the original peoples and yet a third for all others. For although there are two official languages, there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other. No citizen or group of citizens is other than Canadian, and all should be treated fairly. (*Debates* 8545)

The controversial nature of this claim, particularly as a comprehensive interpretation of the import of the Commission, is apparent when one considers it in reference to the cultural dualism of the Commission's mandate and explicit terms of reference. Trudeau subtly substituted the dualistic "bilingualism and biculturalism" with a new policy of "multiculturalism within a bilingual framework."[9] Trudeau thereby replaced the Commission's conception of two founding races or *peuples,*[10] British and French, with his conception of a multiplicity of cultures within a bilingual framework. Thus, unlike the Official Leader of the Opposition Robert Stanfield, who stated, in response to Trudeau's announcement, that "the emphasis we have given to multiculturalism in no way constitutes an attack on the basic duality of our country (*Debates* 8546), Trudeau was careful to never mention cultural duality or its accuracy as a depiction of the Canadian constitution; the boldness of Trudeau's project was in some sense left just below the surface.

Trudeau's second major argument was that "a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework is basically the conscious support of individual freedom of choice. We are free to be ourselves" (*Debates* 8546). Why, however, are "cultures" essential to freedom of choice in the first place? According to Trudeau, the principle of freedom presupposes a conception of individual flourishing that can only by nurtured within cultures that are publicly recognized for their worth. Trudeau implies that the cultures into which we are born are our first means for thinking about the world, and thus our

[9] It is true that the Commission was not unanimous on the question of cultural dualism and multiculturalism, but the former was clearly the majority view. The latter view was most clearly endorsed by Commissioner J.B. Rudnyckyj in his argument for multilingualism, or guarantees for regional languages spoken by ten percent or more of the region's population (*Bilingualism and Biculturalism* 155-169). On this point, see Temelini, "Multicultural Rights, Multicultural Virtues" 53.

[10] "Les deux peuples fondateurs," roughly translatable as "the two founding peoples/nations," is the slightly distinct phrase found in the French version of the Report.

initial faith in our cultural identities will promote our participation in public life. Accordingly, Trudeau argues that multiculturalism is the means to one's initial confidence in one's identity, a confidence that is, in turn, a necessary condition for genuine national unity and robust intellectual participation in public life:

> National unity, if it is to mean anything in the deeply personal sense must be founded on confidence in one's own individual identity; out of this can grow respect for that of others and a willingness to share ideas, attitudes, and assumptions. A vigorous policy of multiculturalism will create this initial confidence. It can form the basis of a society which is founded on fair play for all. (*Debates* 8545)

Trudeau, however, is careful to specify that multiculturalism only provides the *initial* confidence in our identities. As Trudeau makes clear, one of the benefits of the securing of this initial confidence is the liberal exchange of "ideas, attitudes, and assumptions," an exchange that presumably leads individuals to challenge and question the goodness of their initial cultural identities. In sum, multiculturalism ensures freedom of choice by ensuring the only true means to freedom of choice, an awareness of the range of ideas and conceptions of the good life. As we shall see (Chapter 3), this argument at the heart of Trudeau's liberal multicultural design becomes the foundation of Will Kymlicka's liberal theory of minority rights.

It bears noting that Trudeau's argument for multiculturalism does not ascribe importance to cultures as self-subsisting entities, or as entities which require the devotion of constituent parts. Rather, Trudeau identifies cultures as instrumentally important. Accordingly, Trudeau is clear that bilingualism and multiculturalism are not, at least in the first instance, to be advanced because they preserve cultural goods, but because they allow individuals to overcome their own cultural horizons. Hence, Trudeau asserts that

"if the individual were locked for life within a particular cultural comportment by the accident of birth or language" (*Debates* 8545), his freedom would be radically hampered.

The crucial foundation of this argument is the claim that one's language does not determine one's culture. More specifically, Trudeau argues that a commitment to bilingualism does not commit one to biculturalism, or to a dualist conception of Canada's cultural heritage: "To say that we have two official languages is not to say that we have two official cultures, and no particular culture is more 'official' than another" (*Debates* 8545). Thus, what appears to remain of the Commission's terms is the national commitment to bilingualism, a policy Trudeau could earlier enact on a national scale by refusing to endorse the nationally unpopular policy of biculturalism. However, Trudeau's dissociating of culture and language also produced a shift in context that radically alters the meaning of bilingualism, and the dualism it originally meant to represent. The obvious premise of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework is that one's linguistic framework does not determine one's cultural identity.

Trudeau's conception of language and culture is far from uncontroversial. Trudeau's conception is precisely what is denied by nationalists, who view bilingualism as the guarantor of cultural duality. The French-Canadian Henri Bourassa gives a powerful articulation of this nationalist alternative: "when a race ceases to express its thought and feelings in its own language, the language that has grown with it and been formed along with its ethnic temperament, it is lost as a race. The preservation of language is absolutely necessary for the preservation of a race, its spirit, character, and temperament" ("The French Language and the Future of Our Race" 133). Under Trudeau's system, by contrast, bilingualism would no longer be an argument in favor of

biculturalism. In fact, Trudeau subtly suggests that bilingualism would serve to undermine the reifying assumptions of biculturalism. Learning one of the official languages of the country, and thereby knowing one "of the two languages in which his country conducts its official business and politics "(*Debates* 8545), provides a means of liberation from one's particular cultural comportment. According to Trudeau, then, bilingualism cultivates a comprehensive awareness of the diversity of Canada's national politics, an awareness which is irreconcilable with dualism.

Thus, the novelty of Trudeau's experiment consists in his coupling of this rejection of the French-Canadian conception of language and culture with a frank assertion that the Canadian attempt to achieve a "truly pluralistic state" represents a modern and unrenounceable vision of the good.[11] In making this claim regarding the goodness of the Canadian experiment and the way of life it envisions, Trudeau's liberal multicultural project provides a stark alternative to forms of liberalism which attempt to remain neutral on cultural questions. In a fundamental sense, Trudeau's endorsement of multiculturalism helps secure a form of polyethnic liberalism that self-consciously eschews traditional cultures for modern cultures. For Trudeau, modern cultures are those which do not demand the devotion of its constituent individuals, or the subordination of the individual to the culture; rather, modern cultures provide individuals with the means to develop their capacity for freedom of choice and their capacity to reject the cultures into which they are born.

[11] As Temelini has argued, "in adopting the 1971 multiculturalism policy, the federal government implicitly recognized that it could not remain neutral concerning the virtue of multiculturalism. The aim of the new policy was to promote a new way of life presupposing [a] comprehensive conception of the good" ("Multicultural Rights, Multicultural Virtues" 56).

Trudeau's argument regarding the goodness of the Canadian experiment and the vision of modernity it espouses rests upon his assertion that there is an absence of any *particular* official culture in Canada. For Trudeau, the absence of a particular official culture does not entail state neutrality. Rather, Trudeau's pluralistic state requires a diversity of modern cultures to flourish, and to do so in a form that is amenable to the flourishing of individuals. Trudeau's critique of protecting particular modern cultures at the expense of others is nested within an argument regarding the kinds of cultures that are able, and should be able, to flourish in modern states. Cultures, according to this original vision of multiculturalism, are the vehicle for integration of cultural members into a wider polyethnic state. Since such a commitment to multiculturalism assumes cultures to be modern and open rather than parochial and closed, liberalism should not be, and cannot be, difference blind.

The great benefit of Trudeau's statement of polyethnic liberalism, as compared to arguments regarding state neutrality, is the honesty it affords regarding the impossibility of remaining neutral on cultural questions. If one is frank that liberalism rests upon a foundation of multiculturalism that embraces modern cultures, to the exclusion of traditional illiberal cultures, one is able to provide political reasons and arguments for supporting cultural practices that buttress liberalism, and to provide political reasons and arguments for discouraging or limiting the reach of those cultural practices and ideas that are incompatible with liberalism.[12] Trudeau thus provides the intellectual and moral

[12] The consequences of this honesty are evidenced by the difference between Canada and the United States on the issue of hate speech. In contrast to the United States Supreme Court, which has often twisted itself in knots in its desire to remain "content neutral," the Canadian Court has used decidedly cultural arguments in its circumscription of hate speech. For instance, compare *Nationalist Socialist Party v. Skokie*, 432 U.S. 43 (1977) and *R. A. V. v. City of St. Paul* (90-7675), 505 U.S. 377 (1992) to *R. v. Keegstra*, [1990] 3 S.C.R. 697. The opinion of the Court in the latter case draws upon Trudeau's claim that multiculturalism is meant to preserve an individual's self-confidence: "Parliament's objective of preventing the harm caused by hate

architecture for the cultural programs that would soon flourish within Canada, as well as a liberal standard by which such programs could and should be critiqued and evaluated.

Trudeau and Anti-Nationalism

Thus far we have traced Trudeau's justification for a policy of multiculturalism as both a response to the challenges being raised by a politicized Quebec, and as an ambitious vision of the possibility of modern liberal government. Multiculturalism, by extending recognition to modern and open cultures, is intended to prove the viability of overcoming ethnic and cultural tensions through the recognition and tolerance of diversity. It therefore serves as means to civic integration within a diverse modern state. Implicit in Trudeau's vision, however, is a radical challenge to nationalism, and a corresponding hope that ethnic or cultural nationalism can be overcome on a global scale. Hence, Trudeau's interpretation of the Canadian experiment rests upon the belief that multiculturalism is not simply a domestic or state policy; Canadian multiculturalism, in its most substantial and expansive sense, attempts to meet the challenges of ethnic nationalisms that threaten modern liberal government. Trudeau's vision of Canada's future thus points to an anti-nationalist vision of modernity.

---

propaganda is of sufficient importance to warrant overriding a constitutional freedom. Parliament has recognized the substantial harm that can flow from hate propaganda and, in trying to prevent the pain suffered by target group members and to reduce racial, ethnic and religious tension and perhaps even violence in Canada, has decided to suppress the willful promotion of hatred against identifiable groups. Parliament's objective is supported not only by the work of numerous study groups, but also by our collective historical knowledge of the potentially catastrophic effects of the promotion of hatred. Additionally, the international commitment to eradicate hate propaganda and Canada's commitment to the values of equality and multiculturalism in ss. 15 and 27 of the Charter strongly buttress the importance of this objective….Hate propaganda contributes little to the aspirations of Canadians or Canada in either the quest for truth, the promotion of individual self-development or the protection and fostering of a vibrant democracy where the participation of all individuals is accepted and encouraged."

It is worth emphasizing that this is not the dominant understanding of most contemporary liberal theorists. Rather, contemporary liberalism is generally committed to the claim that individuals only achieve freedom and equality within the culture in which they are born, and that these cultures tend to be liberalized nations.[13] For instance, Kymlicka, who often appears to be the multicultural theorist most indebted to Trudeau, has argued that "democratic politics is politics in the vernacular," insofar as citizens are only comfortable entering into political debate in their own tongues (*Politics in the Vernacular* 213). Moreover, Kymlicka argues, the spread of a common civilization has not led to a homogenous common culture, as "national minorities have fought to maintain themselves as separate and self-governing societies, living and working in their own languages, even as they modernize and liberalize their historical cultures" (*Politics in the Vernacular* 207). Thus, while "cosmopolitanism may eventually triumph...for the foreseeable future, and for good reasons, the desire for individual freedom and democratic participation will be pursued within the context of national cultures" (*Politics in the Vernacular* 218). In sum, contemporary liberalism has generally been dominated by the claim that anti-nationalist arguments, such as those forwarded by Trudeau, are idle speculations, divorced from the real world force of contemporary nations.

Why, then, does Trudeau believe it is necessary to depart from nationalism, or that nations "belong to a transitional period in world history" ("New Treason" 177)? Although Trudeau presents several criticisms against nationalism, it is worth dwelling on one of special importance for our purposes, particularly insofar it provides a marked contrast with the contemporary liberal culturalist account. Above all, Trudeau argues that

[13] For variations on this argument, see Miller; Rawls, *Political Liberalism*; and Tamir. The theme of liberal nationalism in contemporary theory is covered in more detail in Chapter 2.

"the aim of a political society is not the glorification of a 'national fact' (in its ethnic sense)" ("Quebec and the Constitutional Problem" 4), since the very idea of the nation-state is theoretically antithetical to modern liberal government. As evidenced by the horrors unleashed by nationalism in the last two centuries ("New Treason" 157-158), "a state that defined its function essentially in terms of ethnic attributes would inevitably become chauvinistic and intolerant" ("Quebec and the Constitutional Problem" 4). The absurdity of the pursuit of complete national sovereign power is that it is necessarily self-destructive: "every national minority will find, at the very moment of liberation, a new minority within its bosom which in turn must be allowed the right to demand its freedom" ("New Treason" 158). The real purpose of the modern liberal state is "the general welfare of all citizens regardless of sex, colour, race, religious beliefs, or ethnic origin" ("Quebec and the Constitutional Problem" 4). For this reason, Trudeau's arguments for multiculturalism are part of a larger argument regarding the limits of cultures in determining the choices available to individuals. Trudeau's robust bilingual and multicultural federation is designed to free individuals from the constraints of their original cultures, or to ensure that one's way of life is not determined by accident and chance. As we shall see (Chapter 3), Trudeau's argument has largely been abandoned in the contemporary liberal multicultural literature, yet it is unclear whether this abandonment has not proved fatal to liberal multicultural theory.

Trudeau's hopes that the Canadian experiment could lead to world peace thus follow naturally from his corresponding hope that Canadian multiculturalism would undermine the traditional claims of national cultures. In other words, the hoped for death of the nation-state in Canada, and the proliferation of modernized cultural groups and

civic integration through cultural diversity, is intended to undercut the strong political passions and sacrifices that are called forth by nationalist causes. In a liberal multicultural Confederation, any nationalism that demands total devotion and self-sacrifice of its citizens is inherently dangerous and suspect. As Trudeau emphasized throughout his writings, the argument that the nation is "sovereign" is retrograde in a double sense ("New Treason" 151ff.): not only can the nation not plausibly be the basis for state lines in an increasingly diverse world, but modern liberal government has progressed from the era when nations could demand total sacrifice from individuals, as if the nation stood apart or above the individuals who composed it. Sovereignty's proper locus is not the nation, nor even the state, but the individual. Hence, "there will be no end to wars between nations until...the nation ceases to be the basis of the state. As for inter-state wars, they will end only if the states give up that obsession whose very essence makes them exclusive and intolerant: sovereignty" ("New Treason" 158). In short, Trudeau's argument against nationalism, as many Quebecers saw clearly, undermines the very idea of a separatist nationalist cause; the project of nationalism is itself inherently irrational and archaic, the necessarily exclusive and violent pursuit of an unrealizable goal.

Constituting a Multicultural Confederation

When one takes Trudeau's arguments regarding the Canadian experiment and nationalism seriously, the project of constituting a Confederation of genuinely free and modern liberal cultures begins to come into view. Canada's multicultural identity

becomes less a matter of chance and more a matter of design. Thus far we have focused upon Trudeau's official and unofficial arguments for liberal multiculturalism as a source of the Canadian multicultural identity. In order to demonstrate Trudeau's success at implementing a comprehensive constituting vision, however, it is necessary to show Trudeau's achievements in shaping political practice. This is particularly true since, as noted, Trudeau did not attempt to constitute a liberal multicultural Confederation through explicitly multicultural policies. To this end, I will elaborate upon two transformations of the Canadian regime, both of which are intertwined with the successful growth of Canada's multicultural identity: first, the institution of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the consequent legalization of politics in Canada; second, the drastic changes in immigration in Canada and the consequent ethnic diversification of the Canadian population.

Trudeau's establishment of the Charter was a mixture of opportunity and political skill. The precipitating event was Trudeau's threat, in the wake of Quebec's failed 1980 referendum on the question of separation, to request unilateral "patriation" of the Canadian Constitution, without consent of a majority of the provinces. Patriation of the Constitution, or the bringing of the Canadian Constitution to Canada (literally "to the fatherland"), was a prerequisite for any constitutional reform, and would thus be an achievement of monumental importance. The primary obstacle to the provinces' assistance was the terms of patriation: on the one hand, the provinces, and particularly Quebec, desired the devolution of key matters of legislative policy from the federal to the provincial level; on the other hand, Trudeau sought to entrench the federally unifying Charter, along with key protections for federal bilingualism. The Supreme Court of

Canada was thereby forced to rule on the constitutionality of unilateral patriation, arguing first, that such a unilateral request was constitutional, and, second, that such a unilateral request would violate the constitutional convention that one could not amend the powers of the provinces without substantial support from the provinces themselves (*Constitution Reference* 1981). The favorable ruling allowed Trudeau to broker a compromise with the provinces (save Quebec), initiate Britain's passage of The Canada Act, and secure Canada's corresponding passage of The Constitution Act, an Act which included Trudeau's hoped for Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Although shaped by compromises,[14] The Constitution Act was essential for completing Trudeau's liberal multicultural design. In the words of Alan Cairns, the Act was "the most comprehensive use of constitutional arrangements to refashion the Canadian people…since Confederation" (*Charter versus Federalism* 37). One of Trudeau's intentions was to use the Charter to promote a Canadian identity which prized the values of liberty and equality; the document itself is something with which all Canadians could identify. In other words, Trudeau's purpose for the document was not to perpetuate an extant legal tradition or to enshrine already respected rights, but to aspire to a future identity that respected liberty, equality, and fairness to a degree that was not yet achieved (Weinrib, "The Canadian Charter's Transformative Aspirations" 22). That such principles would be secured as part and parcel of a larger liberal multicultural design was indicated by one of the essential pieces of the Act, section 27 of the Charter of Rights and

[14] The key provincial victory, resisted (and later lamented) by Trudeau, was the institution of the Charter's famous Section 33, or "notwithstanding clause," which states that "Parliament or the legislature of a province may expressly declare in an Act of Parliament or of the legislature, as the case may be, that the Act or a provision thereof shall operate notwithstanding a provision included in section 2 or sections 7 to 15." The victory was less substantial than it appeared, however, as the clause has had the paradoxical effect of emboldening the Supreme Court by conferring additional democratic legitimacy on any rulings which are not overturned by Parliament or provincial legislatures.

Freedoms, which demands that "the Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians." Thus, an essential aim of Trudeau's passage of the Charter is its role as a unifying multicultural document. The text of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is intended to "preserve and enhance" Canada's multicultural heritage, both as a point of common concern for Canadians who identify with the document, and as a key passage for interpreting the meaning of the document as a whole.

More specifically, the legalization of Canadian politics that was engendered by the institution of the Charter is a key cornerstone of Trudeau's liberal multiculturalism. A Charter, by strengthening the power of an appointed Court against Parliament, ensured that the political rights associated with liberal multiculturalism would be preserved even in the face of hostile majorities. Thus, the unsurprising result of the institution of the Charter "has been a massive increase in judicial review," with almost all cases concerning Charter or Aboriginal rights (Hogg, "Canada: Privy Council to Supreme Court" 58).[15] Moreover, in arming individual citizens with a clear and accessible Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Trudeau provided the means for individuals to stand against cultural or democratic majorities, a key aim of his conception of liberal multicultural political life. In short, the Charter promoted Trudeau's commitment to the liberal principle of individual freedom of choice, and the ideal of a rights conscious citizen, to the detriment of the nationalist commitment to a "general will," and the ideal of a citizen devoted to a nationalist cause.

This raises the second transformation of the Canadian regime which Trudeau helped to bring to fruition, the increasing ethnic diversification of Canada. The surest

[15] For a recent summary of the legalization of Canadian politics since the Charter, see Petter.

sign that multiculturalism, broadly construed, has been a constituting aspiration in Canada has been the drastic changes in immigration since the early 1970s, changes that represent the broader aims sought by Trudeau. In part, Trudeau's role in immigration reform was simply to affirm the changing conceptions of acceptable immigration policy in Canada and throughout much of the modern West. Accordingly, the changes in immigration patterns in the 1970s were made possible by legal reforms slightly predating Canada's official multicultural policy (the historical period often named "The Incipient Stage" of Canadian multiculturalism). Most notably, the policy of "White Canada," which had restricted Black and Asian immigration, ended in 1962, and the opening of Canada's borders to immigration from "non-traditional" sources began in the late 1960s. Moreover, Trudeau was particularly fortunate insofar as he inherited a country that was ideally situated to having borders open to diverse sources. Unlike the United States to the south, or a number of European countries, Canada did not need to concern itself with an influx of immigrants from a single cultural source.

Be that as it may, Trudeau's official endorsement of multiculturalism worked to strengthen and intensify Canada's multicultural immigration efforts to a degree that is unmatched even by other immigrant countries, while simultaneously making Canada a more welcome home to "non-traditional" immigrants. Accordingly, the early 1970s marked the end of a post World War II wave of Canadian immigration dominated by Southern Europeans and began a non-European pattern of immigration, which continues to the present day. India, China, Pakistan, Korea, North Africa, the Caribbean, and the Middle East are now the chief sources of Canadian immigration. In absolute terms, immigration, beginning in the mid-1980s, has risen to historic heights, with roughly 3.3

million immigrants arriving from 1991 through 2006. In the 2006 census, 19.8% of the Canadian population was born outside of Canada, its highest total in 75 years, and over a 1% increase from the 2001 census. Moreover, the sources of Canadian immigration are diverse; according to the 2001 census, a high of 16.2% of total Canadians self-identify as "visible minorities," up from 4.7% in 1981 and up from 13.4% in 2001. While officially bilingual, Canada's multicultural policy has naturally led to a diversity of languages; over 10% of homes primarily speak a language other than English or French, with Chinese, German, Italian, and Punjabi being the most common. In short, Canadian immigration policy provides empirical confirmation of Canada's increasing commitment to multiculturalism and is beginning to produce a country that is capable of matching Trudeau's description of a polyethnic state.

While Canada's changing immigration patterns are not radically unique and benefit from Canada's advantageous geographical position, they have, in tandem with Canada's official multiculturalism, combined to produce a politically unique result. As presumably anticipated by Trudeau, the change in Canada's demographic composition has had a profound effect upon Canada's political culture. [16] The proliferation and strengthening of ethnic diversity has produced a greater foundation for resistance to distinct status for particular cultural groups. In other words, the proliferation and strengthening of ethnic groups has transformed the kinds of cultures or cultural claims which are deemed politically permissible in Canadian politics. As predicted by Trudeau's theory, the increasing of cultural diversity through immigration has tended to undercut

[16] For an interpretation of the Canadian immigration patterns and Canadian multiculturalism which is more skeptical of its uniqueness, see Kymlicka, "The Canadian Model of Diversity." What Kymlicka's analysis fails to acknowledge is the long-term aspirations and implications of Trudeau's constitutional design.

the claims of particular cultures to distinct status. More specifically, immigration has increased opposition to the dualistic interpretation of Canada. As we shall soon see, ethnic nationalisms, such as the Québécois nationalism that prompted Canada's multicultural policies, have become a difficult proposition in contemporary Canadian politics.

The Challenge of Quebec

Trudeau's liberal multiculturalism rests upon several key tenets: the promotion of freedom of choice through the proliferation and recognition of modern cultures; a dissociation of culture and language; the preservation and furthering of liberty, equality, and fairness through an aspirational Charter of Rights and Freedoms; and, perhaps most importantly, the cultivation of peaceful, sober, and open-minded individuals through an attack upon the "sovereignty" of the nation. Although the ambitions of Trudeau's liberal multicultural vision are clearly intended to be realized over decades, the contemporary successes and failures of Trudeau's project are represented by the partial success of one of his most important constitutional aims: promoting national unity by defusing Québécois nationalism and separatism.

Trudeau's partial success is perhaps best reflected by the reception of Trudeau's constitutional achievements in Quebec. Although the Charter itself has been a popular success in Quebec, Trudeau's patriation of the Constitution provided an animating event for Québécois nationalists and the separatist movement. The legacy of French Canada's dualistic vision of Canadian Confederation, which was often coupled with Quebec's

demand for a veto on constitutional amendments, has been to shape Quebec's response to Trudeau's constitutional reforms to the point of antagonism: the Quebec government, reflecting the sentiment of the vast majority of Quebec's political elites, refused to endorse Trudeau's constitutional reforms, and following two failed attempts at constitutional reform—The Meech Lake Accord (1987) and the Charlottetown Accord (1992)—the province has barely avoided separation. Thus, Canada's changing Constitution has had, in the short term, the effect of provoking Québécois nationalism and separatism. The most obvious evidence of this provocation is the recent referendum on Quebec sovereignty association. In 1980, the first referendum, roughly 40% of Quebeckers and 50% of francophones supported sovereignty association. In 1995, following the patriation of the Constitution, Quebec's refusal to pass a resolution confirming The Constitution Act as Canadian law, and the failed attempts at constitutional reform, the separatist movement reached its zenith, receiving the support of 49.4% of Quebeckers, and close to 60% of francophones.

Yet, over a decade later, Trudeau's attempt to defuse Quebec separatism has had some success.[17] While there is still significant support for separation in Quebec, recent elections in 2003, 2007, and 2008 have been influenced by a fracture in Québécois nationalist politics: many Quebec nationalists, formerly represented almost solely by the Parti Québécois (PQ), a largely social democratic party benefiting from conservative support due to its separatist stance, shifted their support to the Action Démocratique du Québec (ADQ), a fiscally conservative and moderately nationalist party seeking "autonomy" rather than "separation." The high water mark for the ADQ was the 2007

[17]For a good discussion of the ground and importance of this fracture, which informs this section as a whole, see Forbes, "Immigration and Multiculturalism vs. Quebec Separatism."

election, when the once peripheral party won 31% of the popular vote and 41 seats, including a plurality of francophone voters. Although the 2008 election saw a backlash against the ADQ, which led to the resignation of the party's leader, Mario Dumont, and which reduced the party to seven seats and 16% of the popular vote, the fracture that divided the ADQ and the PQ in recent elections represents the success of multiculturalism in exploiting a key wedge issue in the separatist coalition of social democrats and cultural and economic conservatives. One of the key features distinguishing ADQ and PQ support in recent elections is different conceptions of Quebec nationalism's ethnic roots, and this tension has been evident in Québécois politics since the Quiet Revolution. This historical controversy is underlined by the frequent obfuscation of the ethnic roots of Québécois nationalism.[18] Although the currently dysfunctional ADQ may very well disappear from Quebec's provincial politics, the wedge issue that divided the PQ and ADQ is likely to be a potential rift for any future attempts at separation.

Trudeau's multicultural strategy of undermining Quebec's ethnic nationalism has been, as expected, buttressed by Canada's demographic trends.[19] Jacques Parizeau, leader of the separatist PQ at the time of the 1995 referendum, could complain that "money and the ethnic vote" were the source of the referendum's defeat because, racist

[18] The problem of obfuscation is evident in the term Québécois itself, which began to replace the term French Canadian in the 1960s; while literally meaning a resident of Quebec, it is most often used to describe French speaking residents, or specifically ethnic French Canadians residing in Quebec.

[19] The relevance of Canada's demographic trends for Quebec is complicated by Canada's and Quebec's sharing of immigration policy and Quebec's active attempts to recruit francophone immigrants. Quebec has actively courted francophone immigrants, but, as indicated by their low levels of support for separatism, such immigration has been difficult to reconcile with Québécois nationalism.

overtones notwithstanding, this was by and large true;[20] for aboriginals and immigrants, including francophone immigrants, a multicultural federation is more welcoming than a covertly ethnic nationalism, as evidenced by the low levels of support for separation among these groups. In an increasingly heterogeneous and officially multicultural Canada, it is likely that appeals to a culturally and geographically bounded nation, the Québécois, will become increasingly difficult to defend—at least as the basis for separation.

Yet, if Trudeau's argument could be marshaled against the very idea of Québécois nationalism, it also reveals an uneasy tension that has pervaded Trudeau's own constitutional project. While it is true that Canadian multiculturalism has had a profound effect upon Canadian identity, it is also true that Canadian multiculturalism has only done so through a kind of reverse nationalism. What is paradoxical about Canada's multicultural project is that it is often nurtured by the pride of undertaking a moral project which sets it apart from other "nations." Without such national pride, a pride which often demands sacrifices on the part of current citizens, could such a project succeed? In sum, the continued albeit fractured existence of Québécois separatism, and the uneasy tension between Trudeau's denunciation, and implicit use, of nationalism, is an indication of the partial success of Trudeau's liberal project. Although Canada has escaped, at least in the short term, the threat of separation, Quebec's continued hostility to Canada's federal policy and Canada's continued reliance upon its own form of nationalism is at least evidence of the limitations of liberal multiculturalism as a means to subverting nationalism (McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada* 129-130).

[20] Parizeau's comments were immediately denounced as racist, anti-Anglophone, and anti-Semitic, and he was forced to resign. The irony of Parizeau's comments, of course, is that the separatist movement is built upon an "ethnic vote."

The Canadian example is also evidence of two additional points. First, Canada's embrace of multiculturalism has been shaped by a factor particular to it—its unique history as a settler society with a dualist founding and a fortuitous geographical position—and thus it is difficult to generalize from any successes of the Canadian experiment. As we have seen, the Canadian form of multiculturalism, by officially recognizing diverse cultures, is potentially a means of moderating the political demands of heterogeneous cultural groups. Yet, this underlines a critical reason for Canadian multiculturalism in some sense particular to Canada: its usefulness in undercutting Québécois nationalism, a longstanding threat to Canadian unity. Multiculturalism has arguably taken root in Canada, more than other settler societies, because of the cultural and linguistic duality extant since Confederation. French-Canadian demands for recognition facilitated similar demands by other cultural groups, such as Ukrainian Canadians, and multiculturalism has been, in many ways, a constitutional response to these demands for recognition. More problematically, multiculturalism can be viewed as a liberal constitutional design that is intentionally antagonistic to French Canada's vision of itself as one of Canada's two founding nations. The importance of dualism goes beyond the initial rationale for multiculturalism. If Trudeau's original design was a coherent liberal multicultural vision that attempted to jettison French Canada's dualist self-understanding, the current ideal of contemporary Canadian multiculturalism—which promotes diversity as an ostensible good in itself—has arguably been nurtured by Quebec's cultural claims and Quebec's refusal to relegate culture to secondary status. Crucially, then, culture, as a constitutive common good, is palpable in Canada because it has been the battleground of Canada's most recent constitutional crisis.

Second, Canada's embrace of multiculturalism as official policy and the official rhetoric concerning its success conceals the more fundamental cultural struggles taking place in Canada. The persistence of Québécois separatism and nationalism, directed against a multicultural federation, suggests the limits of multiculturalism as a basis for civic nationalism in culturally heterogeneous countries. Québécois nationalism expresses a facet of culture not easily accommodated by the more sanguine accounts of multiculturalism. Quebec's rejection of Canada's federal policy is suggestive of a demand to be recognized as more than one cultural contributor among many and thus for political merits not universally shared by all cultures. French-Canadian contributions to the Canadian regime are essential for the self-understanding of the Québécois, and adequately recognizing these contributions in their particularity requires political distinctions that undercut the universalistic bent of Trudeau's conception of liberal multiculturalism. Rather than forgo such discriminations, Canadian multiculturalism has tended to replicate this aspect of nationalism, suggesting that the Canadian people are somehow distinct as members of a moral experiment that distinguishes Canada from other countries still in the grips of archaic nationalisms.

Charles Taylor: A Pluralist Account of Nationalism

Trudeau's remarkable successes, combined with the tensions still present in Canadian politics, raise a critical question: is it possible to reconcile Canadian liberal multiculturalism with some forms of nationalism? Charles Taylor has provided the most promising alternative constitutional vision of Canada, one which attempts to articulate the

moral sources of multiculturalism and nationalism from within the "communitarian" tradition.[21] In fact, Taylor's notoriously varied philosophical interests are united in their importance for interpreting Canada's constitutional crisis. As we shall see, however, Taylor's articulation of the politics of recognition that animates both multiculturalism and nationalism serves more to clarify the challenge nationalism poses to liberal multicultural theory than to dispense with the political problems posed by nationalism. Moreover, in articulating a conception of cultural or collective goods which transcend their usefulness to individuals, and which call forth our obligations, Taylor presents a rival, and potentially theistic, account of the foundations of cultural goods. Accordingly, understanding the true import of Canadian multiculturalism, and the prospects for liberal multiculturalism in the modern world, ultimately leads beyond Canadian politics to a discussion of the role of the transcendent in shaping modern cultures.

Three of Taylor's early interests are particularly worthy of note: his studies on nationalism, federalism, and Quebec's role in Canadian Confederation; his critique of behavioralism and methodological individualist approaches to the human sciences; and, finally, his overriding interest in philosophy of language and its relevance for both modern politics and the human sciences. As has been evident in our discussion of Trudeau's attempt to reform a Canada constituted by a dualist history, a potentially unifying thread of these apparently disparate concerns is their focus upon a conception of the human subject as one who is necessarily a part of a larger linguistic community, a linguistic community which can embody and express goods that transcend their usefulness to particular individuals. Taylor's critique of modern social science, his

[21] Taylor's role in the academic debates on liberalism and community are discussed in Chapter 3. For a discussion of Taylor's ontological "communitarianism," see Taylor, "Cross-purposes," especially 181-186.

arguments in favor of participatory and republican forms of government, and his critique of early modern designative theories of language all serve to undercut Trudeau's instrumental approach to language and culture. In contrast to Trudeau, Taylor articulates a rival conception of "irreducible social goods." This is particularly true as regards the example of language. As Taylor has emphasized throughout his writings, for French Canadians, language is more than an instrument, it constitutes a fundamentally untranslatable way of being in the world ("From Philosophical Anthropology to the Politics of Recognition" 109). To see how this is the case, I will trace the two most relevant strands of Taylor's reflections on liberal multiculturalism: Taylor's interpretation of Canada's contemporary constitutional crisis; and, second, his arguments regarding the politics of recognition and its importance for understanding Québécois nationalism.

Although Taylor has been occupied with understanding and shaping Canada since the early days of his political and intellectual career, the contrast between Trudeau and Taylor on the future of Canada is perhaps most evident following Trudeau's constitutional successes. According to Taylor, Trudeau's attempt to achieve a pan-Canadian identity that revolves around liberal multicultural rights has prompted a constitutional struggle between those who are committed to rights and those who are committed to collective goals which cannot be subordinated to individual rights:

> The new patriotism of the Charter has given an impetus to a philosophy of rights and of non-discrimination that is highly suspicious of collective goals. It can only countenance them if they are clearly subordinated to individual rights and to provisions of non-discrimination. But for those who take these goals seriously, this subordination is unacceptable. The Charter and the promotion of the nation, as understood in their respective constituencies, are on a collision course. ("Shared and Divergent Values" 165)

Thus, Taylor, despite Trudeau's substantial achievements, has asserted that Trudeau's constitutional project did not, and does not, settle the Canadian question. Taylor's alternative interpretation of Canada can be reduced to two basic propositions: first, the Canadian sense of citizen dignity is closer to a "participatory" than a "rights" model; and, second, "the combination of an unresolved national identity as Canadians and the strength of [Canada's] regional societies makes it virtually mandatory for Canada to practice a more decentralized style of government than comparable federations" ("Alternative Futures" 111). Hence, Taylor presents a vision of Canada that would attempt to retain a participatory model of government through decentralization, thereby allowing for the preservation of collective goals which are not reducible to the protection of individual rights or instrumentally conceived individual aims.

All this is to say that the dispute between Trudeau and Taylor is ultimately a dispute regarding the *kinds* of collective goals which are acceptable in a liberal society. Trudeau's arguments for liberal multiculturalism, and rights-based liberalism, do not, as Taylor seems to imply, abandon the pursuit of collective goals as such. Rather, Trudeau's political system is necessarily concerned with those collective goals which make individual self-realization possible. In fact, it is this concern that leads Trudeau to the rejection of transcendent collective goals. As we have seen, the essential precondition of healthy political life in Trudeau's system is security in one's initial cultural comportment, a security which is ensured through the collective pursuit of a polyethnic state. Moreover, as Taylor notes, and as Trudeau knew well, this rights model collectively cultivates a particular kind of citizenry. In a society dominated by the rights model, such as the United States, "the dignity of the free individual resides in the fact that

he has rights that he can make efficacious if necessary even against the process of collective decision making of the society, against the majority will, or the prevailing consensus" ("Alternative Futures" 92). Thus, rights model societies "tend to try to attain certain ends – such as the social promotion of disadvantaged groups, or the ensuring of equality – by court action based on rights claims, rather than through mobilizing a majority for legislative action" ("Alternative Futures" 93).

According to Taylor, serious doubts remain regarding the viability of this rights model and the centralization it entails, doubts that are arising in the apparently successful American case. Not only does the centralized rights model fail to address crucial malaises of modernity—the alienation, meaninglessness, individualization, and sense of impending social dissolution often present in modern life—the stress upon rights against common decisions may prove a poor substitute for having a say in common decisions and may serve to undercut the legitimacy of the democratic order ("Alternative Futures" 112). Thus, part of Taylor's concern seems to be that Canadians maintain a conception of participating in, and being constituted by, groups which are the site of common decisions. Such groups do not simply pursue collective goals in the sense of securing goods for individuals, but also provide meaning and a sense of order through common attachments which transcend the individual.

In Taylor's preferred participatory model, the individual's "freedom and efficacy reside in his ability to participate in the process of majority decision making, in having a recognized voice in establishing the 'general will'" ("Alternative Futures" 92). As evidenced by its greater receptiveness to social programs and its greater respect for government than the United States, Canada has inclined towards a more participatory

than rights-based model, and this is itself an argument in favor of the participatory model for Canada. As Taylor emphasizes, this is not to say that rights are not protected in Canada or participatory models generally, but that they are only protected through a political process which is more committed to political participation and the common decisions of communities. "What defines [the participatory model] is that the sense of citizen dignity is based on having a voice in deciding the common laws by which members live" ("Alternative Futures" 94), and within this context rights have played a key part in all liberal democracies. The clear presupposition of the participatory model is a strong sense of community identity. Without such identification with the community, one's concern with the efficacy of one's participation in the community makes little sense.

In sum, Trudeau's ideal of the individual who is conscious of his or her rights is replaced, in Taylor, by the ideal of the individual who partakes of, and is devoted to, particular communities which transcend the individual and which can be the locus of common decisions. Although Trudeau's account of political life does not preclude participation in collective pursuits, and even suggests that a robust political life is often a prerequisite for self-realization, Trudeau is explicit that to confer sovereignty upon anything but the individual is to lose sight of the ultimate ground of polyethnic liberalism. Therefore, Taylor's account—which claims that liberalism cannot do away with our identification with communities which transcend us as individuals, and even requires such identification to avoid the loss of meaning and sense of malaise that attends modern rights-based liberalism—presents a stark challenge to Trudeau's political vision. As we shall see, this challenge continues to plague the liberal multicultural consensus,

and particularly the thought of Trudeau's most significant intellectual heir, Will Kymlicka.

Where Taylor and Trudeau converge is upon the claim that liberalism or our communal attachments cannot and should not lead to a homogenous nation-state, nor to the closed-mindedness of traditional communities. Taylor, like Trudeau, shares the concern that modern states are simply too diverse to achieve homogenous nationalisms. The result of Taylor's two-fold commitment—to the diversity of the Canadian Confederation (or any modern state) and to modern communities as an orienting concern for political decisions—is therefore an argument for a decentralized Confederation. In favoring a decentralized participatory model of rights liberalism, Taylor clearly has Quebec in mind. The survival of Québécois culture is thought to be a common good worth pursuing in Quebec, and this goal has animated its resistance to Canadian multiculturalism.

More importantly, and more controversially, this common good is conceived of as transcending its usefulness for particular members of the community. According to present day Québécois, the Québécois nation should be preserved beyond their lifetimes. Taylor argues that this common goal of preserving Québécois culture can be sought without encroaching on the basic rights of other cultures or individuals, because not all things we call rights are created the same. Quebec distinguishes, and Taylor advises us to distinguish, between essential rights, such as "rights to life, liberty, due process, free speech, free practice of religion" ("The Politics of Recognition" 59; "Shared and Divergent Values" 176 - 177), and privileges and immunities that can be restricted for the sake of public policy. The Quebec alternative is therefore an alternative version of

liberalism, but one which follows the rights model insofar as it guarantees individual rights and respects diversity:

> A society with strong collective goals can be liberal, on this view, provided it is also capable of respecting diversity, especially when dealing with those who do not share its common goals; and provided it can offer adequate safeguards for fundamental rights. There will undoubtedly be tensions and difficulties in pursuing these objectives together, but such a pursuit is not impossible, and the problems are not in principle greater than those encountered by any liberal society that has to combine, for example, liberty and equality, or prosperity and justice. ("The Politics of Recognition" 59-60)

Based on Taylor's understanding, there is no necessary contradiction between ensuring cultural diversity through transcendent collective goals and rights-based liberalism. Transcendent collective goals are and can be liberal if they are also capable of respecting individual rights.

Quebec's approach to rights-based liberalism returns us to the question of nationalism and its proper place in a diverse liberal democratic country. Again, Taylor follows Trudeau in denying the possibility and desirability of exclusive nationalism: the trouble with elevating nationalism as the orienting concern for states is that obsessive nationalism tends to concern itself primarily with power, thereby hindering other essential moral aims. Thus, Taylor insists that modern states must be pluralistic ones. As a result of recent technological changes, and recent increases in immigration, states are simply too diverse to deny pluralism. Although Taylor argues against the possibility of homogenous nation states, he also insists that modern states have not abandoned the concept of nationhood. What has changed is that unanimity within states can no longer be taken as a starting point, nor can unanimity within states be recovered.

Accordingly, Taylor argues that the identity of individuals within states is now irreversibly political, and will be constituted by the political process. In this conception

of politics, Taylor again departs from Trudeau. Politics, Taylor asserts, must proceed from a view of culture and claims of recognition that do not reduce them to instrumental value. For this reason, Taylor insists that the root cause of Canada's constitutional crisis is not material factors or archaic closed-mindedness but recognition. This crucial fact has often been obscured in Canadian politics by the tendency to dress up the demand for recognition as a demand for something else, such as a concern with rectifying historical, rather than present day, injustices. As Taylor argues, Quebec's claims for a "distinct society" clause during Meech Lake and Charlottetown were never "merely" symbolic. Quebec's demand to be recognized as a distinct society was meant to establish recognition for Quebec's distinct way of life, without reducing this claim to a homogenizing system of multiculturalism where all lay equal claims to distinctness. As is evidenced by the Quebec case, then, Taylor's alternative conception of Canada, as a decentralized confederation that recognizes diversity and collective goals which transcend the individual, turns on Taylor's seminal work on the politics of recognition.

"The Politics of Recognition"

Taylor's reflections upon multiculturalism and the politics of recognition are intertwined with an interpretation of modernity. Taylor provides an account of how we arrived at a point where Trudeau's project, which presupposes the importance of concepts such as identity and recognition, makes sense. As an analysis of Taylor's work makes

clear, Taylor's ostensibly idiosyncratic interest in Western modernity turns out to be essential for understanding and evaluating liberal multiculturalism.[22]

Taylor opens "The Politics of Recognition" by noting the empirical fact of the politics of recognition: one cannot begin to speak about modern Western politics without acknowledging the force of identity and recognition. According to the politics of recognition, our identity, or beliefs about who we are, can be profoundly perverted by misrecognition or the absence of recognition. Thus, recognition "is a vital human need" ("The Politics of Recognition" 26).[23] Taylor argues that our awareness of this vital and apparently universal human need is grounded upon an historical development: the collapse of social hierarchies. The collapse of social hierarchies is pivotal insofar as it entails the superseding of honor with the accordance of equal respect to all individuals. The modern age is distinct because it possesses "conditions in which the attempt to be recognized can fail" (35); recognition no longer corresponds to agreed upon social categories which provide moral recognition for us. As Taylor stresses throughout his large historical works, *Sources of the Self* and *A Secular Age*, modernity consists, in part, in the movement from the belief in an *ontic logos*, or a rational order of being to which hierarchical categories correspond, to a view which asserts that we are the makers or authors of our social categories. Since hierarchy is no longer inscribed in the heavens or in nature, we must search elsewhere for recognition of our worth. Hence, we are now all painfully aware of our vulnerability to the misrecognition or nonrecognition of our individual or communal identities.

---

[22] The importance of Taylor's unique emphasis on the nature of modernity is developed in Chapter 3.
[23] Unless noted otherwise, all page references in the remainder of this chapter refer to Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition."

While the collapse of social hierarchies has uncovered a universal human need, the second crucial development in the rise of the politics of recognition is a positive and novel conception of the self and its relation to the good, namely the emergence of an ideal of "authenticity." This second development entails an understanding of the self, articulated by Rousseau, such that "being in touch with our feelings"—rather than God or the Platonic Idea of the Good—"takes on independent and crucial moral significance. It comes to be something we have to attain if we are to be true and full human beings" (28). According to this second development, each of us has an independent way of being human, and we are called to live our lives in this particular way. Being pulled out of oneself, or seeing ourselves as instruments for external purposes, is to lose what it is to be human.

However, given this inward ideal of authenticity, why the demand for recognition? It is in his answer to this question that Taylor radically departs from Trudeau. Taylor's fundamental claim is that human life is not monological, but dialogical: "we become full human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence defining our identity, through our acquisition of rich human languages of expression" (32). At first glance, Taylor's account seems compatible with Trudeau's account of the need for multiculturalism as providing an initial confidence in our identities. However, unlike Trudeau, Taylor emphasizes the power of social groups, and linguistic communities in particular, in shaping human identities, a process that continues throughout our lives. Taylor thus argues that recognition, as a social and moral concept, is important insofar as our identity is always negotiated with others. As Taylor explains, the contemporary context, wedded to a novel account of the authentic, individual self,

provides both intimate and social conditions in which recognition can fail: intimately, the formation of an original identity needs and is vulnerable to significant others; publicly, "identities are formed in open dialogue, unshaped by a predefined social script" (36). While our understanding of identity begins with introspection, it must be solidified through external dialogue.

As we have seen, Trudeau's account of the proper role of identity claims in modern politics is to insist upon the goodness of modern cultures which are inclusive and tolerant, to the exclusion of parochial and intolerant cultures. Claims of "difference" are thus accommodated in Trudeau's account by being subsumed under the unifying good of modernity, an accommodation that ensures equal and similar treatment for individuals and groups. In opposition to this universalizing account, Taylor argues for two viable meanings of the politics of recognition in the Western public sphere: the politics of universalism, the form of politics endorsed by Trudeau which entails the equalization of rights and entitlements; and the politics of difference, which entails differential treatment on the basis of relevant distinctions. While the latter conception has a formally universal ground—everyone should be recognized for their own unique identity—the substance of what is being recognized is distinct and unique. On this latter view, recognition of difference is required as a principle of equality because ignoring distinctness is a political act that strengthens the hegemonic power of dominant identities. For instance, to ignore the distinctness of the Québécois is, necessarily, to strengthen the dominant Anglo-North American identity.

According to Taylor, a tension in the politics of recognition—between recognition of universal dignity, and recognition of human beings in their unique particularity—may

be traced to a tension in the politics of equality. This more fundamental politics of equal dignity, a commitment we all share as moderns, is based on the claim that all humans are equally worthy of respect, by virtue of their universal human potential or their universal dignity as rational moral human agents. However, the demand has arisen for recognizing more than individual potential. On this view, the recognition of actually evolved cultures is thought to constitute true equality. This extends the principle from recognizing potential to recognizing what humans have, in fact, made. Thus, the "two modes of the politics of equality,…both based on the notion of equal respect, come into conflict" (43): the first mode reproaches the second with violating the principle of non-discrimination; the second reproaches the first with negating identity through a homogeneous, hegemonic liberal mold, thereby suggesting that liberal individualism is a discriminatory particularism posing as a universalism.

Is this tension resolvable? If so, how might one go about resolving such a tension? As has been intimated, Taylor's response in "The Politics of Recognition," an approach consonant with his major works, is two-fold: first, Taylor turns to the West's own intellectual history as a means of describing the power of our moral sources (44); second, Taylor argues for a version of the Canadian model of liberal multiculturalism, outlined above, which shows the compatibility of differential treatment on the basis of relevant distinctions.

The purpose of Taylor's turn to the liberal West's intellectual history is to recover our own moral and spiritual sources, both to reveal how we might live up to such sources, but also to reveal, more subtly, how they are positive visions of the good among other viable conceptions. In particular, Taylor suggests that Rousseau is a novel signpost in the

West insofar as he is the first to articulate discourse on recognition by thinking through the importance of equal respect and its necessity for attaining freedom. According to Taylor's Rousseau, the relationship between equal respect and freedom is connected with the problem of honor and hierarchy. Hierarchical relations, exemplified by the relation between master and slave, corrupt both parties insofar as all members of the relation are slaves to opinion, or hierarchical "honor," and are thereby divorced from their true selves. Contrary to initial appearances, however, Taylor's Rousseau is not wholly a critic of public esteem. In a good society, where there is a reciprocal relation between equal citizens, people should, in fact, care for public esteem. Unlike modern society, where a concern for esteem pulls one away from oneself, the concern for esteem in an egalitarian republic is intertwined with reciprocal relations that take place in the "open air"; individuals follow themselves as equally honored members of the "general will," made possible by a political system possessing a true unity of purpose.

Yet, this account, Taylor argues, possesses a flaw which ultimately makes it untenable in the modern age: it depends on a lack of individual differentiation, "the formula for the most terrible forms of homogenizing tyranny, starting with the Jacobins and extending to the totalitarian regimes of our century" (51). Freedom, the absence of differentiated roles, and a very tight common purpose are inseparable in Taylor's Rousseau. The difficulty is that where Rousseau's model reigns, "the margin to recognize difference is very small" (51). Significantly, Taylor's principal critique of Rousseau, unlike the traditional liberal critique regarding the dangers of a model which does not guarantee liberal rights, is distinctly modern: Rousseau fails to recognize the full power of difference within regimes. Therefore, as we saw in Taylor's account of

Canada's participatory model, the problems posed by the politics of recognition cannot be resolved in the direction of Rousseauian republicanism, or in the direction of unrestrained majoritarianism. Such republicanism inevitably fails to accommodate difference, with the losers of such struggles being perverted by the misrecognition or absence of recognition of their authentic selves.

It is at this point in Taylor's historical narrative that he turns to the Quebec form of rights-based liberalism outlined above. Again, the Quebec model of rights-based liberalism is one that allows for the restriction of certain privileges and immunities for the sake of collective goals, while, at the same time, respecting cultural diversity and individual rights. Having considered the context of Taylor's defense of the Quebec model, the questions which plague it have also become evident. Taylor alludes to the "tensions and difficulties" in pursuing a respect for diversity and strong collective goals, yet he is largely silent on the substance of these difficulties. In fact, in his turn to a more communitarian approach to rights-based liberalism, Taylor glosses over a number of contestable assertions. First, Taylor appears to blur the very distinction between "rights" and "privileges and immunities" that can be restricted. How, precisely, does one determine which individual rights can never be transgressed? Taylor's example of language in Quebec in some sense ignores the problem: might not one legitimately ask if Quebec's language laws transgress the fundamental right to freedom of speech?[24]

[24] The problem is illustrated by the controversy surrounding decisions such as *Ford v. Quebec* (Attorney General), [1988] 2 S.C.R. 712. On the basis of an account of language similar to Taylor's own, The Supreme Court found that the protection of French was a valid constitutional aim, but that Quebec's languages could not prohibit the use of other languages: "Language is so intimately related to the form and content of expression that there cannot be true freedom of expression by means of language if one is prohibited from using the language of one's choice. Language is not merely a means or medium of expression; *it colours the content and meaning of expression*" (emphasis my own). While one can very easily reconcile Taylor's account with the opinion of the Court, the controversy that followed underlined the unpopularity of Quebec's language laws in the rest of Canada. The controversy did not simply extend

Moreover, Taylor does not elaborate upon the politically contestable distinction between those cultures which deserve political support and resources, and those that are merely tolerated. How does one determine which group has "majority culture" status and which group is able to enact legislation which restricts individuals of other cultural or linguistic groups? The problem is that from the synoptic Canadian perspective, or the English-Canadian perspective, the Québécois are a minority within a greater whole. Thus, a commitment to the cultural aims of the greater collective, in this case, might actually be in conflict with the Québécois' cultural aims. Conversely, from the perspective of minority cultures within Quebec, which are in danger of failing to survive as cultures, the material and political support for Quebec language and culture is a discriminatory practice which potentially allows one culture to survive at the expense of others. Without a fuller account of which groups should be allowed to pursue collective goals and which collective goals should be pursued, Taylor's principle is potentially employable by groups seeking ends antagonistic to one another.

A glimmer of Taylor's answer to this challenge is provided in the concluding paragraphs of this discussion. In spite of the dominance of the Anglo-American model, Taylor maintains that societies are becoming increasingly multicultural, and thus "the rigidities of procedural liberalism may rapidly become impractical in tomorrow's world" (61). Quebec's confrontation with "English Canada," Taylor intimates, is indicative of a world-historical shift to forms of liberalism more attuned to collective goals, yet also embracing of diversity within these cultural horizons; while determining which cultures

---

to Quebec's temporary use of the notwithstanding clause to preserve the sign laws. The changes in legislation in 1993 (Bill 86), which allowed for English on public signs as long as French is the sign's predominant language, brought Quebec's language laws in line with the Charter. However, in spite of these changes, many Canadians in the rest of Canada still view the sign laws as an undue restraint on freedom of expression.

should be promoted is fraught with "tensions and difficulties," empirical practice suggests that diverse cultures, and a diversity of constitutional practice, can be cultivated within one state. In supporting non-uniformity of constitutional practice, Taylor departs substantially from Trudeau's liberal multicultural vision. If Taylor does possess what can be properly defined as a liberal multicultural vision, it is one that demands that communities be more properly recognized in their unique particularity, as opposed to being exclusively recognized under the universal umbrella of multiculturalism.

This concluding deference to practice arguably explains Taylor's decision to portray the issue of cultural preservation as an issue of competing liberalisms, as opposed to an issue of the tension between liberalism and multiculturalism. Taylor's refusal to provide clear theoretical guidelines suggests that the resolutions to intercultural disputes will often include compromises or "inspired adhoccery"[25] that run counter to our established theories. To emphasize the theoretical tension between liberalism and multiculturalism, a task Taylor refuses to undertake, might serve to weaken such political compromises. Taylor's reticent portrayal of the tension between liberalism and multiculturalism thus serves to acknowledge the necessity of multiculturalism—as a powerful moral force in modern politics which is buttressed by increasing diversity within regimes—but to mute the demand for theoretical precision and clarity. Moreover, this theoretical haziness facilitates political compromises, the theoretical import of which might eventually be comprehended in hindsight (Forbes, "Realism" 20).

[25] The term is Taylor's own ("The Rushdie Controversy" 121). Interestingly, Stanley Fish appropriates Taylor's term in his famous debunking of multiculturalism to suggest a more pragmatic stance to multiculturalism ("Boutique Multiculturalism" 386); while Taylor would obviously resist Fish's conclusions, the possibility of appropriation is suggestive of the more realistic facets of Taylor's political thought.

Similar political motivations can be discerned in Taylor's abstract defense of collective goals which transcend the individual. Although Taylor's account provides an ontological ground for nationalist claims, his account of the modern necessity of pluralism, and the continued importance of individual rights, reveal Taylor's wariness of the actual practice of nationalism. For instance, Taylor's claim that the French language is a way of being in the world is a far cry from nationalism as it is experienced in Quebec politics. As we shall see (Chapter 5), Taylor's concern for maintaining or even cultivating an awareness of the diverse expressions of the transcendent in the modern world, as well as his cognizance of the political power of nationalist majorities and the fragility of their moral sources, seem to lead him to articulate the vitality of claims to the transcendent, while often remaining silent on the theoretical limitations of our more particular claims.

Canadian Multiculturalism and the Question of the Transcendent

Taylor's reserve in articulating a theory of liberal multiculturalism underlines the stark contrast between Trudeau's and Taylor's conceptions of liberalism and multiculturalism, rival conceptions which have animated Canada's most recent constitutional crisis. On the one hand, Trudeau's vision of multiculturalism is self-consciously transformative and idealistic. According to Trudeau, the purpose of liberal multiculturalism is to refashion the Canadian state into a peaceful microcosm of global diversity, and the Canadian people into rights bearing liberal multiculturalists. Trudeau, of course, was aware of the many obstacles to such a distant and ambitious goal.

Nonetheless, he has been incredibly successful at inculcating liberal multiculturalism in Canada, and in English Canada in particular. Trudeau's vision thus clarifies the idealistic hopes that have shaped Canada's constitutional project, as well as the moral force of these hopes.

Taylor's account of the tensions still plaguing Canadian practice, by contrast, offers a reminder that Trudeau's idealistic vision has failed to achieve, at least at the present time, one of its primary goals. Most notably, liberal multiculturalism has failed to undermine Québécois nationalism and the conception of a transcendent national good upon which it is often based. The persistence of nationalism in Quebec strengthens Taylor's claim that irreducibly social goods will continue to be a part of healthy political practice. Moreover, the continued vitality of Québécois nationalism bolsters Taylor's claims that a universalizing account of multiculturalism cannot do justice to the claims for particular recognition being voiced by contemporary national and cultural groups.

Taylor has presented a secular vision of the distinctness of the Québécois, which attempts to recognize the Quebec way of life in its particularity. In Quebec, Taylor argues, the French language is itself a way of being in the world, and thus its preservation is sufficient for preserving a distinct Québécois community. However, a fundamental question still plagues Taylor's account. Can the Québécois continue to preserve a distinct nation and language of expression if its once defining difference from Anglo-Protestant North America—its Roman Catholicism—fades from view? Taylor's secular account of the politics of recognition is difficult to evaluate precisely because Quebec's secularization has not been complete. In fact, Québécois nationalism has continued to be nurtured by a strong minority of conservative Québécois nationalists who seek to

preserve a traditional Québécois way of life and its Roman Catholic religious forms. Absent such traditional influences, it is unclear the extent to which Quebec would remain genuinely distinct. As the numerous debates regarding religious heritage in liberal democratic countries makes clear, this tension in Quebec politics is far from a unique case.

To what extent does Taylor's secular account of cultural diversity correspond to the actual claims being made by minority groups? On this point, it is worth recalling the traditional ground of French-Canadian nationalism. Prior to the Quiet Revolution, the primary reason often given for the need to protect the French language and thus French culture was not the protection of French-Canadian culture as an end in itself. Rather, to complete Bourassa's aforementioned defense of nationalism, the French-Canadian defense of language was an essentially pious one: "we [French Canadians] believe that the preservation and development of the language is to us the human element that is most necessary to the preservation of our faith" ("The French Language" 140). Since the Quiet Revolution, this concern has largely retreated from public life in Quebec. Yet, the contemporary tensions between religious minority groups and Quebec's majority culture—i.e., the disputes over Christmas trees at Montreal's city hall, the frosting of YMCA windows for the sake of Orthodox Jews, the requests for Muslim prayer rooms at educational institutions, and the many controversies surrounding religious clothing—have reintroduced the question of the place of religion in Quebec's political life and public discourse, a question that was only apparently settled with the Quiet Revolution.

More fundamentally, however, this renewed interest in the question of the proper place of majority and minority religion in Quebec life requires a reassessment of the

nature of secularization and the relation of this secularization to Québécois nationalism. What has been a primary source of contention is the extent to which Quebec's commitment to secularization—a commitment which is professed by the vast majority of Quebecers—entails emptying the state of religious symbols, including the symbols of Quebec's Catholic majority. The profound questions still surrounding Quebec's secularization, and their importance for settling the question of the proper place of religion in liberal politics, are illustrated by the 2008 reporting of "The Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences" co-chaired by Taylor. The Commission recommended a policy of "open secularism," a secularism which "defends a model centred on the protection of freedom of conscience and religion and a more flexible conception of State neutrality" (*The Consultation Commission* 138). Although we will return to the specifics of the open secularism advocated by the Commission (Chapter 5), it is important to note that the Commission's steadfast advocacy of open secularism—which proposed to remove the crucifix from the wall of the National Assembly, to deny prayers at municipal council meetings, to provide a mandatory course on ethics and religious cultures, and to prohibit certain public officials from wearing religious signs—was met with controversy rather than applause. Demonstrating the gulf between Taylor's defense of Quebec culture and Québécois nationalism, both the PQ and the ADQ criticized the Commission's report for failing to sufficiently recognize the vulnerability of Quebec's majority culture. In fact, the first reaction by Premier Jean Charest (leader of the Quebec Liberal Party) and the National Assembly was not to welcome the Commission's findings, but to reject, unanimously, the proposal to remove the crucifix from the wall of the National Assembly. What Québécois nationalists mean

by a commitment to secularism is clearly not the same thing as what religious liberals such as Taylor mean.

As evidenced by the reception of the Commission's Final Report, the fundamental question still at the heart of Quebec's nationalist politics is not simply the place of religion in Quebec's public institutions, and the bounds of "reasonable accommodation" for religious minorities, but the full consequences of its commitment to secularization. What is still unclear is whether a liberalized and secularized Quebec will be able to retain its distinctness. Can Quebec provide a policy of secularism which is equally open to ethnic and religious minorities and the Catholic majority, which is nevertheless capable of sustaining the nationalist cause? Thus far, Québécois nationalism has been accompanied by a parallel, if sometimes submerged, religious politics that makes a more total claim to distinctness, and which is difficult to disentangle from Quebec's resistance to the federal Canadian approach to multiculturalism. In sum, the conflict between Canada and Quebec on the issue of constitutional reform and multiculturalism, and between Trudeau and Taylor on the question of collective goals which transcend the individual, points to the need for an account of secularization and its importance for understanding the proper place of religion in liberal politics; the possibility of a meaningful form of liberal multiculturalism would seem to rest on such an account. It is thus unsurprising that Taylor has devoted himself, in recent years, to this task. However, prior to evaluating Taylor's account of secularization as a bulwark of genuine diversity (Chapters 4 and 5), we must first see how the regnant liberal multicultural consensus has failed to confront the tension between liberal multiculturalism and religious diversity that has been illustrated by the Canadian example (Chapters 2 and 3).

Chapter 2

The Liberal Culturalist Consensus and the Problem of Religion

Contemporary political theory has largely interpreted the tensions between liberal practice and multiculturalism as a problem of identifying the rights of minority groups, as well as the proper relation between liberalism and culture. Through such a refined understanding of liberal theory, liberal multicultural theorists have largely attempted to settle or ameliorate the current tensions in liberal multiculturalist practice. On the question of minority rights, Will Kymlicka, perhaps "the best and best-known contemporary defender of the rights of minority cultures" (Okin, "Feminism and Multiculturalism" 676), has argued that the academic literature on minority rights, and "the normative issues raised by such minority rights" (*Politics in the Vernacular* 17), has undergone three basic and progressive stages: an original liberal-communitarian debate, which viewed minority rights through the lens of communitarianism; a debate regarding the role of minority rights within liberalism; and, finally, a debate regarding the proper limits of liberal nationalism and the relation of liberal nationalism to minority rights. Consequently, the original debate, which first appeared as a debate between starkly divided theoretical and political positions, has since become a debate within a more fundamental liberal culturalist consensus. According to Kymlicka, participants in debates on minority rights now agree upon basic tenets of liberalism and the protection of cultures in some form. Has this consensus on the question of minority rights represented a true evolution, which can help resolve the challenges to liberalism uncovered in our

analysis of Canadian multiculturalism, or does it come at the expense of other genuine and pressing "normative issues raised by [claims to] minority rights"?

Contra Kymlicka, I argue that the apparent progress in these debates has often represented a failure or unwillingness to confront challenges and limits to liberal theory which were revealed in the original liberal-communitarian debate. In particular, contemporary discussions regarding liberalism, multiculturalism, and minority rights tend to obfuscate or superficially gloss the significance of religion and religious difference for cultural claims, and thereby tend to misinterpret the true challenges to liberalism which are being confronted in countries such as Canada. In order to show how the growing consensus identified by Kymlicka has represented a distorted picture of religious and religious difference, I begin by articulating Kymlicka's account of this consensus. Since this distortion of religion within the liberal multicultural consensus rests upon mistaking what was at stake in the original liberal-communitarian debate, I then show how the problem of religion came to define, implicitly and then explicitly, perhaps the most significant exchange in the liberal-communitarian debate, that between the liberal John Rawls, and one of his most perceptive "communitarian" critics, Michael Sandel. Finally, I show how Kymlicka's critique of Sandel does not decide the issue, as Kymlicka contends, in favor of a reformulated early Rawls. Rather, I argue that Kymlicka's reformulation of Rawls provides an impoverished account of moral life and moral language, and thereby falls prey to the original communitarian challenge to liberal theory.

The Liberal Culturalist Consensus

According to Kymlicka, the liberal culturalist consensus reconciles liberalism with extant political practice, and clarifies liberalism's role as a normative ideal which should shape such practice. Liberal culturalism is therefore meant to ameliorate or even resolve the challenges to political practice that we discerned in the Canadian case. That is, liberal culturalism offers a theoretical model which is meant to recognize the claims of both national minorities such as the Québécois, as well as minority religious groups which have sought reasonable accommodation within Quebec. As noted, this academic consensus was achieved through two developments. The first development transformed the traditional debate between "liberals" and "communitarians" over the priority of individual freedom into a more clear-sighted and fruitful debate between scholars who disagree over the role of minority rights within liberalism but who are more or less equally committed to liberalism itself. In this new debate, "the question of minority rights is reformulated as a question within liberal theory, and the aim is to show that some (but not all) minority rights claims enhance liberal values" (*Politics in the Vernacular* 23).[1] This stage of the debate reflects genuine progress from the liberal-communitarian debate, Kymlicka argues, because it more accurately reflects the liberal claims being made by ethnocultural groups, and more accurately grasps the normative issues raised by these claims. Gone is the "sterile and misleading debate about individualism and collectivism" (23), and its misleading assumption that one's place in the liberal-communitarian debate determines one's stance on minority rights. In this debate's place, Kymlicka argues, is a lively and instructive discussion concerning the role

[1] Unless noted otherwise, all page references in this section refer to Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular*.

of cultures and minority rights in buttressing or advancing liberalism. The ostensible challenge to liberal practice posed by cultural and religious diversity therefore turned out to be no real problem at all.

More controversially, Kymlicka has argued that there is a second, more recent, development regarding "the legitimacy of some form of *liberal nationalism*" (39). That is, liberals now generally agree upon a form of nationalism which is consonant with liberalism yet constrained by liberal principles.[2] In this third stage of the debate, the ostensible neutrality of the liberal state trumpeted by earlier liberals such as John Rawls and Ronald Dworkin is dismissed on the grounds that the state's choice of language and shared social institutions is always a non-neutral choice which promotes one or a few cultures at the expense of others. Public institutions may thus be "stamped with a particular national character" (39). However, in liberal states, this national character must consist of a relatively open, and thin, conception of the national community. In such a state, individuals are free to express their own national identity, and are not subject to coercion by the state. Moreover, in its public spaces, liberal nationalisms are actively encouraged, leading to an openness concerning diverse official languages and even the secession of particular regions of the country (40). Liberal nationalism is thus not aggressive, and accepts "the necessity and legitimacy of 'multination' states within which two or more self-governing nations are able to co-exist" (41). Accordingly, the question among liberals has once again shifted, with liberals now probing the limits of liberal nationalism: do particular majority attempts to promote nation-building create injustices

[2] The most notable works in this context are Yael Tamir's *Liberal Nationalism* and David Miller's *On Nationality*.

for those minorities whose cultures are not contained within the nation, and do minority rights protect against such injustices (26 - 27)?

In addition to the growing consensus on liberal nationalism, the third stage of the debate has included a growing consensus on liberal multiculturalism.[3] Liberal multiculturalism accepts the claim that non-national groups, "such as immigrant and refugee groups, religious minorities, or even non-ethnic cultural groups like gays or the disabled" (41), have the right to recognition, accommodation, and representation, but this claim is constrained by liberalism's insistence that group membership should be a matter of freely chosen self-identity, rather than state coercion. Moreover, "individual members must be free to question and reject any inherent or previously adopted identity group" (42); the state must forbid the violation of individuals' basic civil or political rights by groups. With such liberal principles in place, multiculturalism can justly protect minority groups from disadvantage: "multicultural accommodations must seek to reduce inequalities in power between groups, rather than allowing one group to exercise dominance over other groups" (42). Combined, the consensus on liberal nationalism and liberal multiculturalism constitute what Kymlicka names the "liberal culturalist consensus": the belief that liberal democratic states should uphold group-specific rights and policies to recognize and accommodate ethnocultural groups as a necessary supplement to the familiar individual civil and political rights of citizenship (42).

As Kymlicka's account makes clear, the development of the liberal multicultural debates necessarily rests upon the assertion that the original debate between "liberals" and "communitarians" was confused on questions which have since been clarified. According to Kymlicka, the debates concerning individualism and collectivism and the

[3] For instance, see Baubock; Raz; Spinner; and Young.

neutrality of the state were chief among the confusions of the earlier liberal-communitarian debate. Liberalism, properly understood, can be amenable to group rights and nationalisms. Yet, although most participants in the liberal-communitarian debate would admit that the original debate was plagued by unnecessary analytic confusions,[4] it is less clear that the recent "emerging consensus" regarding the compatibility of minority rights and liberalism has straightforwardly remedied, rather than ignored or even exacerbated, confusions latent in this original debate. To see how this recent consensus has failed to address the challenge of religious diversity which was latent in the liberal communitarian debate, it is worth returning to the starting point of Kymlicka's own political thought: the political philosophy of John Rawls.

Rawls and the Problem of Religion in *A Theory of Justice*

John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice*, published in 1971, marks the beginning of the liberal communitarian debate that dominated political theory for close to two decades. Rawls' account in *Theory* is revealing of the liberal side of the liberal communitarian debate, as well as its account of religious life, for a number of reasons: first, he provides a systematic articulation of the "procedural" liberal position, one which is a touchstone for other liberals in the field; second, Rawls' project, and especially *Theory*, has been the subject of numerous communitarian commentaries, and is thus the clearest entryway into a communitarian position which was largely developed by way of critique of

[4] One of the staples of the liberal-communitarian debate was discussions regarding the confusions of the debate itself. This is exemplified by the reservations expressed regarding the title of "communitarian" by communitarianism's most prominent expositors. For instance, see MacIntyre 35; Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* ix; and Taylor, "Cross-Purposes" 181.

contemporary liberalism; and, finally, Rawls' own change of position late in his life, decried by some fellow liberals,[5] helps to elucidate both important shortcomings of his work, and the shift in academic focus by contemporary thinkers of liberal multiculturalism.

One can most easily grasp Rawls' conception of religious life in *Theory* by considering the role it plays in his overarching argument. Rawls' primary aim in *Theory* is to arrive at principles of justice through a hypothetical social contract. These principles are what "free and rational persons concerned to further their own interests would accept in an initial position of equality as defining the fundamental terms of their association" (*Theory* 11). In order to achieve this initial position of equality, Rawls provides an account of contracting representatives in the original position who do not know their class position and social status, their assets, natural abilities, and talents, or even "their conceptions of the good or their special psychological propensities" (*Theory* 12). Hence, according to Rawls, the initial position of abstract equality that governs the original contract and clarifies our principles of justice requires abstracting and generalizing from political life. What, however, is the status of religious attachments in this initial position?

Religion appears in Rawls' *Theory* not as a constitutive attachment which is the source of our conceptions of morality, but as a particular feature of our identity from which we must abstract if we are to arrive at fair principles of justice. Rawls insists that

[5] For instance, Brian Barry laments Rawls' later revision of his thought, and bases his critique of Kymlicka's account of a liberal multicultural consensus on grounds similar to those of the early Rawls (6-8). In contrast, Kymlicka attempts to show how his liberal theory of minority rights actually flows from Rawls' own account of culture; Kymlicka's Rawlsian theory of minority rights corrects for Rawls' implicit and erroneous assumption that any state only has one such cultural structure (see especially *Liberalism, Community, and Culture* 177-178).

the representatives in the original position must squarely face the fact that their spiritual aspirations or religious attachments might conflict with the spiritual aspirations or religious attachments of others. Possessing distance from their religious commitments– "they are to presume that even their spiritual aims may be opposed, in the way that the aims of those of different religions may be opposed" (*Theory* 13-14)—allows the contracting parties greater rationality and mutual disinterest. Implicit throughout Rawls' account is the claim that religious experience does not offer insight into moral life, but potentially clouds or biases our conceptions of fairness or justice. Removed from such clouding particulars, Rawls asserts we would all share a liberal egalitarian commitment: our commitment to basic rights and duties, as liberals, would be supplemented by the "difference principle," or the commitment to remedy social and economic inequalities unless such inequalities can be shown to lead to benefits for everyone.

This thumbnail sketch of Rawls' argument in *Theory* is sufficient to reveal the problem it leaves unanswered, and which became the focus of communitarian critics and the late Rawls himself: since the liberal egalitarian doctrine defines Rawls' well-ordered society, how does one respond to, and account for, the beliefs of individuals who adhere to fundamentally different comprehensive doctrines in contemporary life? The problem is that if Rawls' theory of justice depends upon a comprehensive doctrine of liberal egalitarianism, those who do not already subscribe to such a doctrine would be forced to accept the imposition of a liberal code of law which does not reflect their own principles of justice. What is left unexplained by Rawls is why conceptions of justice which are non-liberal in character are not present in an original condition, or how Rawls' thought experiment is able to persuade those who do not already subscribe to the principles of

justice which he is articulating. The necessary, and largely unsupported, assumption of Rawls' account is that we already know that liberal egalitarian principles of justice are the right principles of justice. However, this assumption and the project of moral clarification which it engenders cannot account for the diversity of moral and religious outlooks in the modern world, and the importance of these outlooks for shaping their adherents' conceptions of justice. In short, Rawls' argument begs the essential question: are our liberal principles the right principles? If so, how might we demonstrate their rightness to those who do not already subscribe to them?

This problem comes especially to light in *Theory* by way of Rawls' often undefended assumptions regarding religion and religious tolerance. For instance, in his account of religious toleration, Rawls emphasizes our certainty regarding the injustice of religious intolerance: "we are confident that religious intolerance and racial discrimination are unjust. We think that we have examined these things with care and have reached what we believe is an impartial judgment not likely to be distorted by an excessive attention to our own interests" (*Theory* 19 - 20). Since we are certain that religious intolerance is as unjust as racial discrimination, and that such a judgment does not reflect an "excessive attention to our own interests," the choice of religious toleration in the original position serves to confirm the justice of the principles chosen by the contracting parties. By suggesting that religions already meet the religious test of toleration, Rawls is suggesting that we all already know the rightness of freedom of conscience (*Theory* s.32 - 35). But do we all already know this liberal principle, and other liberal principles, or is this precisely what is at issue in religious challenges to liberal practice?

In this context, one might consider the challenges to liberalism being faced in Quebec. The challenge is two-fold. On the one hand, the perceived failure of Catholic Quebec to accommodate and tolerate Muslim and Jewish groups is what prompted the aforementioned Consultative Commission on reasonable accommodation. However one decides on the justness or rightness of the resistance of certain Québécois to religious minority groups, it is difficult to avoid the basic conclusion that the proper scope of openness and religious toleration is a live question for many Québécois. What one sees, for instance, in the National Assembly's decision to keep the crucifix in a position of prominence and authority is an outright refusal to deny Catholicism's importance for defining the government of Quebec and the Québécois people. On the other hand, many of the misplaced fears of the Québécois, directed primarily towards Muslim citizens and recent immigrants, should have us at least consider the real problem that is posed to liberal practice by the existence of intolerant religions. While it is true that most Westerners are, in fact, devout liberals, this is not to escape the challenge posed by the existence of religions and religious groups that do not accept the liberal principles of toleration and freedom of conscience. As noted in the introduction, the Amish in North America provide a vivid example of a religious group which often seems to strain liberal principles. And as evidenced by events such as 9/11, any open and liberal society must contend with the existence of enemies or foreigners—such as certain strands of Islam—which do not respect our principles. In an increasingly smaller world, the problem global, rather than national, diversity poses to liberal practice must be confronted. Do we have a defense of freedom of conscience and liberal toleration that is able to persuade those members of religious groups which do not already share our convictions?

The problem these claims reveal is that Rawls provides no reasons capable of persuading non-liberals. If the claims of religious groups are taken at face value, the very notion that reason entails divorcing oneself from one's religious beliefs is false. Rather, for many devout believers, reason is itself constituted through revelation, or through one's religious community, and thus being asked to check one's religious beliefs at the door when determining principles of justice is equivalent to being asked to determine principles of justice only once one has severed oneself from reason properly understood. Accordingly, Rawls' claim that we cannot rightly ask others to acquiesce in forsaking their liberty of conscience, or ask others to acquiesce to religious authorities who claim to be "the proper interpreter of their religious duties or moral obligations" (208), is left undefended. The obvious reply to Rawls' defense of individual choice, which Rawls fails to address, is that the claim to revelatory knowledge is a claim to a privileged and shared interpretation of our religious duties and moral obligations. In sum, the example of religious tolerance and religious minorities raises fundamental problems for Rawls. Most notably, appeals to religious authority or revelation raise questions regarding the intelligibility of the original position, or its usefulness as a pedagogical device. Rawls' attempt to abstract away those attributes which he supposes are morally contingent potentially divorces us from who we are as reasoning human beings. Does it make sense to think about principles of justice divorced from our religious (or secular humanist) attachments? Would not such attachments inevitably be at play in our judgments, however much the veil of ignorance is meant to sideline their significance?

Sandel's Reply: *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*

Michael Sandel's *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* is one of the most perceptive "communitarian" criticisms of Rawls' *Theory* insofar as it demonstrates how many of Rawls' own claims in *Theory* lead to moral claims of the community which transcend the individual. Sandel argues, throughout his critique, that a sympathetic account of Rawls' theory, and particularly Rawls' portrait of the self, actually leads "beyond deontology to a conception of community that marks the limits of justice and locates the incompleteness of the liberal ideal" (*Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* 14).[6] This is because, according to Sandel, we cannot coherently regard ourselves as the kind of beings a deontological ethic requires us to be (14). As we shall see, however, Sandel's criticisms, while successful in revealing some of the shortcomings of *Theory*, largely evades the question of the proper role of religion in public life, as well as the challenge posed to contemporary practice by religious pluralism.

First and foremost, Sandel's critique of Rawls' *Theory* rests upon Rawls' conception of the self. Rawlsian deontological liberalism requires, Sandel explains, "the priority of plurality over unity, or the notion of the antecedent individuation of the subject, [as] the terms of relation between the self and the other" (53). Such plurality is required if distinct individuals are to contract to the principles of justice, and is thus required for the necessarily social virtue of justice to be primary. Moreover, deontological liberalism requires that we are subjects that are prior to, and can be divorced from, our substantive ends, as evidenced by the fact an "I" persists divorced from our particular traits, desires, or ambitions (54 - 55). This Rawlsian account of the

[6] Unless noted otherwise, all page references in this section refer to Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice.*

self, Sandel argues, does not do away with the disembodied subject reminiscent of Kantian idealism it hopes to escape. Rather, it "makes the individual inviolable only by making him invisible, [calling] into question the dignity and autonomy [deontological] liberalism seeks above all to secure" (95). Rawls' difference principle is crucial evidence: in the context of a deontological theory, the difference principle, which rests upon the claim that one's talents and assets are not one's own (since I am more properly an individuated subject prior to such arbitrary assets), fails to account for why the parties to the original contract can redistribute these assets as common goods. To make the case for such redistribution, Rawls cannot avoid a richer account of community and a subject of possession wider than the autonomous individual (102 - 103). Rawls' original position presupposes that such assets, by virtue of not being constitutive attachments of individuals, are necessarily common assets.

Thus, Sandel's critique of the Rawlsian self grapples with the significance of religion for political life in an indirect and general way: Sandel attempts to acknowledge real communal diversity by acknowledging our constitutive communal attachments. According to Sandel, Rawls' deontological liberalism attempts to exalt the individual as free to choose and pursue his or her own conception of the good life, but actually strips the choice of the good of substantial content. Crucially, Rawls denies the possibility of attachments which engage our identity. First, Rawls rules out intersubjective conceptions of the good, such as when "we attribute responsibility or affirm an obligation to a family or community or class or nation rather than to some particular human being" (63), since such formulations suggest, for Rawls, an unclear and otherwise problematic conception of society as an organic whole. In addition, Rawls rules out intrasubjective conceptions

of the good, such as "when we account for inner deliberation in terms of the pull of competing identities, or moments of introspection in terms of occluded self-knowledge, or when we absolve someone from responsibility for the heretical beliefs 'he' held before his religious conversion" (63), since such formulations fail to recognize that every individual person possesses a single system of desires which requires maximization. In sum, Rawls dismisses the existence of any expansive conception of the good or self-understanding which relies upon community in the constitutive sense (64). Rather, in Rawls' system, we perform an "estimate or psychic inventory of the wants and preferences" we already have (162), thereby matching "the ends [we] already have with the best available means of satisfying them" (163). Rawls' abstract account, Sandel concludes, leads to a morally impoverished conception of the self, since "to imagine a person incapable of constitutive attachments…[is] to imagine a person wholly without character, without moral depth" (179).

Although Sandel is arguably successful in showing Rawls' impoverished conception of the self, the problem which besets Sandel's critique is his contestable conflation of the limits of Rawlsian liberalism with the limits of liberalism itself. As we saw in Taylor's articulation of Quebec practice, rights-based liberalism is not necessarily opposed to collective goals which transcend the individual. Accordingly, a rejection of Rawlsian liberalism on the basis of claims of community does not necessarily entail a rejection of liberalism as such, or a demonstration of the limits of liberalism. Sandel's account of intersubjective and intrasubjective conceptions of the good hints at the possibility that some claims to the transcendent might make more sweeping claims regarding the ability of liberalism *per se* to meet the demands of certain communities.

Yet, without leaving the framework of a critique of Rawls' *Theory*, it is difficult to see the nature of these communal claims to which Sandel briefly alludes. Do intersubjective conceptions of the good rest upon higher orders of being, or can they be conceived of in purely immanent or human terms? Does our experience of intrasubjective conceptions of the good reflect a hierarchical ordering of nature or the cosmos, or are our differing rankings of constitutive attachments merely based upon contingent aspects of the self?

Sandel's silence on such questions, and his consequent failure to articulate a substantive vision of communitarianism, is made possible by the abstractness which attends his communitarian account of the self. Sandel's barely proffered alternative is a self constituted by its aspirations and self-understandings, a portrait which attempts to open up space for reflection about one's self and its relation to the good: we "must be subjects constituted in part by our central aspirations and attachments, always open, indeed vulnerable, to growth and transformation in the light of revised self-understandings" (172). Sandel's project clearly suggests that his critique leads beyond theories attempting to place the right before the good, and gestures towards a more robust conception of community in which "we can know a good in common that we cannot know alone" (183). Yet, where Sandel's account fails is in its unwillingness or inability to give an account of the nature and ground of this common good, or of our ability to conceive of a good which "we cannot know alone." Sandel's account of both intersubjective and intrasubjective conceptions of the good—which refer to family, friends, community, nation, as well as concepts such as religious conversion—signals the possibility of our being members of religious communities which demand our obligations, or, as the example of the converted heretic above makes clear, the possibility

that one's spiritual self might be experienced as somehow higher than the self as constituted by our more worldly desires, and thereby deserving of special obligation. However, when alluding to these possibilities, Sandel steadfastly avoids distinguishing or providing the means for distinguishing such claims to the transcendent from those which attempt to articulate purely human goods. Religious communities which claim to be a "subject of possession" greater than the individual can be reconciled with Sandel's description of community, yet Sandel leaves open the pressing question of whether, or what sort of, religious claims to the transcendent are valid claims in contemporary political life

Instead, Sandel's most revealing suggestions point to the special relevance of history as the source of our conceptions of the good, an account which simply deepens the theological questions which plague his account. In a particularly revealing passage, Sandel claims that to have a moral character:

> Is to know that I move in a history I neither summon nor command, which carries consequences none the less for my choices and conduct. It draws me closer to some and more distant from others; it makes some aims more appropriate, others less so. As a self-interpreting being, I am able to reflect on my history and in this sense to distance myself from it, but the distance is always precarious and provisional, the point of reflection never finally secured outside the history itself. (179)

Insofar as we are bound to our history, we are bound to a past which we may or may not be able to overcome fully. Although Sandel is largely reticent about the significance of such claims, his appeal to history, unlike Rawls' appeal to ideal theory, implies that Western thought and practice is, even in its denials and denunciations, constituted by its history. Such a historicist conception of modern practice and thought suggests that any of our self-understandings, whether defined in contrast to the self-understandings of

contemporary others or to our own multi-faceted past, entail struggle and even potential conflict rather than simple liberation. In this context, a moral claim on behalf of diversity requires the concomitant claim that we are called upon to expand our moral horizons through an engagement with foreign others. Accordingly, comprehensiveness with regards to diverse historical traditions and the goods they embody, rather than clarity about already extant moral principles, becomes the standard of moral truth.

Yet, in making this appeal to our historical sources and our historical self-understandings, and the hold such histories have upon us, Sandel rather clearly opens the door to a possibility which he fails to articulate: does our contemporary historical sense of having arrived at modern liberal practice through a decidedly religious tradition, and in many ways through a rejection of key aspects of this tradition—such as the rejection of the role religious authorities once held in public life—entail a re-engagement with this religious past, or is this past an aspect of our history which our provisional self-understandings can and should provide critical distance? As we shall see, this question regarding the nature of Western secularization and its importance for understanding contemporary religious claims, which is prompted by Sandel's analysis but never actually articulated, is ultimately left unaddressed by the liberal-communitarian debates, and the liberal culturalist consensus which follows these debates.

Rawls' *Political Liberalism*

Sandel's "communitarian" critique implicitly, but rarely explicitly, raises the problem of constitutive religious attachments and their alleged role in shaping our

conceptions of both justice and reason. The special problem religious difference poses to liberalism, including the claim to a transcendent truth which brooks no compromise, is submerged under the more general communitarian concern regarding the existence of communities which transcend their constituent individuals, and which can themselves be "subjects of possession" which call forth our obligations. However, the failure of the liberal multicultural consensus to take up the problem of religion in any significant sense cannot be attributed to its lack of articulation in the original liberal-communitarian debates. Exemplifying the tendency of the liberal-communitarian debates to turn on religiously loaded questions, Rawls' revision of his theory in *Political Liberalism*, and Sandel's subsequent reply, make clear how religion was central to their debate.

Rawls, in *Political Liberalism*, frankly admits the problem posed by the plurality of comprehensive doctrines, and in so doing consistently raises the issue of religious diversity which he so often neglected in *Theory*.[7] Rawls emphasizes that a modern democratic society, which allows human reason to flourish under free institutions, is characterized by a pluralism of incompatible yet reasonable comprehensive doctrines, and that this diversity of reasonable comprehensive doctrines shows *Theory* to be

[7] Rawls is unwilling to grant the problem of intelligibility raised above. According to Rawls, Sandel's critique misunderstands the original position because it fails to realize that the contracting parties are merely representatives. Rawls suggests that Will Kymlicka's Rawlsian response to Sandel, outlined below, is largely satisfactory, yet he never seems to address the real challenge, as evidenced by his comparing representation to players on a stage: "our reasoning [in the original position] no more commits us to a particular metaphysical doctrine about the nature of the self than our acting in a play, say of MacBeth or Lady MacBeth, commits us to thinking that we are really a king or a queen engaged in a desperate struggle for political power" (*Political Liberalism* 27n). Rawls' response simply begs the question; what is distinct about identity claims is that they are explicitly not "roles" which can be taken on or off at one's choosing. Moreover, the example of drama is unintentionally fitting insofar as it underlines the difficulty often involved in representation. In cases such as MacBeth and Lady MacBeth, or even more enigmatic examples such as Iago, the very question posed by their characters is whether we can adequately grasp their standpoint. For this reason, we do not necessarily expect an actor or actress playing Iago or Lady MacBeth to know the characters they represent from the "inside."

unrealistic (*Political Liberalism* xvii).[8] This basic fact of the reasonable pluralism of comprehensive doctrines, which extends to doctrines which are nonliberal and religious, leads to a major revision in Rawls' theory. The animating concern of *Political Liberalism*, unlike *Theory*, is to formulate a political conception of political justice that a plurality of reasonable comprehensive doctrines—religious and nonreligious, liberal and nonliberal—might freely endorse, and thereby come to appreciate and understand political justice's virtues (xxxviii). Rawls' description of a constitutional democracy governed by political liberalism thus brings religious diversity to the forefront: such a constitutional democracy would eschew a theoretical or comprehensive conception of justice in order to avoid enforcing one comprehensive doctrine upon minorities. This political conception of justice would be the focus of an "overlapping consensus" of comprehensive doctrines, which is to say that members of diverse reasonable comprehensive doctrines would assent to this political conception of justice for the right reasons; they would assent because it is just.

Yet, in an important sense, political liberalism narrows the potential reach of comprehensive doctrines by making political justice, rather than the moral and religious content of one's comprehensive doctrines, the locus of public discussions. In a state ruled by political liberalism, public discussions which involved constitutional essentials and questions of basic justice would be conducted in terms of the political conception of justice, rather than through one's own comprehensive doctrines (44). To be clear, Rawls attempts to avoid advocating a basic skepticism concerning affirmations of faith or our own beliefs, since advocating a doctrine of skepticism would, of course, be tantamount to advocating a comprehensive doctrine. Instead, Rawls suggests that the condition of the

[8] Unless noted otherwise, all page references in this section refer to Rawls, *Political Liberalism.*

possibility of political liberalism is our recognition that theoretical agreement between reasonable comprehensive doctrines is impossible: "we are to recognize the practical impossibility of reaching reasonable and workable political agreement in judgment on the truth of comprehensive doctrines" (63). Moreover, Rawls stresses that this is especially true regarding the possibility of an agreement that might serve the political purpose of achieving peace in a society characterized by religious and philosophical diversity (63). Rawls' political liberalism thus rests upon our ability to distinguish between a clear political conception of justice that stands apart from our comprehensive doctrines, and a willingness on the part of political participants to identify with this political conception of justice in public life.

The problem, however, is that Rawls never adequately addresses the original problems that plagued *Theory*. Rawls is forced to confront the fact that his distinction between reasonable and unreasonable comprehensive doctrines, and his judgments regarding their compatibility with political liberalism, cannot help but entail judgments regarding the truth of comprehensive doctrines. What, for instance, is Rawls' reply to those moral and comprehensive doctrines which demand that their adherents live by the doctrine in political life? Rawls himself admits that his theory is without the resources to handle such difficulties, since it must imply a relation between political and non-political values:

> If it is said that outside the church there is no salvation, and therefore a constitutional regime cannot be accepted unless it is unavoidable, we must make some reply…. We say that such a doctrine is unreasonable: it proposes to use the public's political power—a power in which citizens have an equal share—to enforce a view bearing on constitutional essentials about which citizens as reasonable persons are bound to differ uncompromisingly. When there is a plurality of reasonable doctrines, it is unreasonable or worse to want to use the sanctions of state power to correct, or to punish, those who disagree with us. (138)

Rawls appears to stress that this does not necessarily make a claim of falsity as regards the doctrine *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*: "rather, it says that those who want to use the public's political power to enforce are being unreasonable" (138). Yet, in the same breath, Rawls concedes that there "may be no way to avoid entirely implying its lack of truth, even when considering constitutional essentials," since our actions of relegating the church to private life will necessarily imply the falseness of this doctrine (138). Rawls is forced to admit that the distinction between reasonable and unreasonable comprehensive doctrines, which purports to be a political distinction, must go beyond the political insofar as it must dismiss those doctrines which deny his political conception of justice as authoritative. Put another way, Rawls is forced to claim that those individuals who identify in public life with their comprehensive doctrines, even when such comprehensive doctrines conflict with political justice, are being "unreasonable."

Rawls' loaded discussion of abortion illustrates that this is not an empty or tangential difficulty.[9] Rawls is explicit that the usually religiously based claim that life begins with conception is unreasonable. Based upon the weighing of three political values—respect for human life, ordered reproduction of the family and political society over time, and the equality of women—"any comprehensive doctrine that leads to a balance of political values excluding that duly qualified right [to abortion] in the first trimester is to that extent unreasonable" (243n). What, however, about those believers who view abortion in the first trimester as equivalent to murder, and thus as a moral travesty requiring political action? First, Rawls responds to this problem by insisting that

[9] For a discussion of this problem from a Rawlsian perspective, see Dworkin, *Justice in Robes* 241-261. As Dworkin's analysis makes clear, it is Rawls' unwillingness to provide a moral defense of liberalism that makes this problem especially acute in *Political Liberalism*.

this contest must be won on the basis of public reason, without recourse to comprehensive doctrines (liv). Second, Rawls claims that if the "Church's nonpublic reason requires its members to follow its doctrine," this is "perfectly consistent with their honoring public reason" (lv).

Is Rawls' charge that religious minorities are being unreasonable on such issues able to meet the religious reply that such "neutrality" effectively allows murder? Unlike in *Theory*, where Rawls' ultimate appeal is to ideal theory, Rawls' ostensible reply in *Political Liberalism* is deference to empirical practice and history. Rawls suggests that history, and particularly our historical insight into the basic fact of reasonable pluralism, is the necessary supplement to political liberalism: "the history of religion and philosophy shows that there are many reasonable ways in which the wider realm of values can be understood so as to be either congruent with, or supportive of, or else not in conflict with, the values appropriate to the special domain of the political as specified by a political conception of justice" (140). Since history informs us of a plurality of reasonable comprehensive doctrines, the conflict between political values and other values is severely diminished. Most comprehensive doctrines, including—with the exception of certain kinds of fundamentalism—all the main historical religions (170), will subscribe to political justice for their own right reasons, making an overlapping consensus possible. Accordingly, Rawls largely downplays the official arguments of the Catholic Church on abortion, and instead refers his objectors to Father John Courtney Murray's stance on the role the Church *should* hold on contraception (*We Hold These Truths* 157n)—the stance of Rawls himself.

As Rawls makes clear, his account of reasonable comprehensive doctrines is, to a great extent, dependent upon the historical claim that the major religions are consonant with his vision. Moreover, Rawls implies that the relatively recent reformation of transcendent religions in the West, which has made a shared political conception of justice possible, protects genuine and free religious belief. Rawls argues, in fact, that this historical movement is the culmination of the democratic project:

> Were justice as fairness to make an overlapping consensus possible it would complete and extend the movement of thought that began three centuries ago with the gradual acceptance of the principle of toleration and led to the nonconfessional state and equal liberty of conscience. This extension is required for an agreement on a political conception of justice given the historical and social circumstances of a democratic society. To apply the principles of toleration to philosophy itself is to leave to citizens themselves to settle the questions of religion, philosophy, and morals in accordance with views they freely affirm. (154)

On its face, Rawls' appeal to history would seem to open an important point of shared concern with Sandel. Not ideal theory, but history as such, appears to be the standard for Rawls in *Political Liberalism*.

In spite of this superficial similarity, Rawls and Sandel are fundamentally divided on the role communal attachments play in shaping our identity, and are thus fundamentally divided on the significance of history in shaping our thought. Rawls sees history as converging upon a shared conception of right or political justice, wherein individuals' distinctness may only extend to their non-political values. In contrast, Sandel suggests that communities must remain open to fundamental change, an openness which requires dialogue with alternative conceptions of the good. Rawls and Sandel's disagreement regarding religion and history is thus a disagreement regarding the relation of the right to the good. For Rawls, the right remains prior to the good in *Political*

Liberalism as much as it does in *Theory*; while Rawls drops his conception of the self in *Political Liberalism* for a political account of liberalism, he continues to maintain that certain principles of right behavior can be found which are neutral with respect to people's moral and religious convictions. Rawls can hold forth a single Catholic thinker against the authority of the Catholic Church because he believes such thinkers are articulating valid conceptions of right. For Sandel, in contrast, our historical conceptions of the good require engagement because the right is necessarily relative to the good. Since justice is relative to the good, our reflections about justice cannot be divorced from our conception of the self and the good life, nor without reference to the good life's diverse historical expressions. Sandel thus leaves open the possibility that diverse religious communities, which are animated by their own visions of the good, could conceivably conflict with other religious or areligious communities regarding the right. From this perspective, Rawls' appeal to history is merely an appeal to our certainty of right principles independent of the actual diversity of the right and the good as it appears in history.

Sandel's "Response to Rawls' Political Liberalism"

As we have seen, Rawls' attempt in *Political Liberalism* to confront the diversity of moral beliefs in the modern world raises the importance of religion for the liberal-communitarian debate. Similarly, Sandel's critique of *Political Liberalism* centers upon a robust conception of the diversity of moral and religious doctrines. Sandel's critique consists of three basic claims. First, Sandel argues that it is unreasonable to bracket

grave moral and religious controversies. If political liberalism is open to the possibility of the truth of comprehensive doctrines, "what is to ensure that none can generate values sufficiently compelling to burst the brackets, so to speak, and morally outweigh the political values of toleration, fairness, and social cooperation based on mutual respect" ("A Response to Rawls' *Political Liberalism*" 197)? As Sandel notes with respect to the example of abortion referenced above, the case for first trimester abortions rests upon showing that there is a relevant moral difference between aborting a fetus in the first trimester and killing a child. One cannot avoid the question of whether or not the doctrine of the Catholic Church is true or false without simply ignoring the real issue that is at stake.

Second, Rawls assumes that the fact of reasonable pluralism of comprehensive doctrines does not extend to the fact of reasonable pluralism in the realm of justice. Rawls must assume that controversies over justice can admit of rational solutions, whereas disagreements regarding the good are necessarily mired in disagreement and discord. However, Sandel notes that Rawls ignores the significant controversies regarding justice and the principles of justice which do take place. Conversely, Rawls provides no evidence, other than an unsubstantiated appeal to history, that controversies regarding the good do not admit of rational argumentation and consensus.

Finally, Rawls' conception of political liberalism denies that public deliberation and reflection can determine what moral or political controversies are reasonable, and thereby places severe limits on what constitutes legitimate contributions to public debates: in the example of abortion rights, those who think abortion is wrong on religious terms, such as on Catholic doctrine, cannot reasonably raise religiously laden arguments

in public debate; similarly, advocates of gay rights cannot contest the substantive moral judgments residing behind anti-sodomy laws; finally, religiously motivated abolitionists could not have appealed to religious arguments for the abolition of slavery. While one may object to Sandel's particular examples,[10] Sandel's basic argument still carries weight: political liberalism's "vision of public reason is too spare to contain the moral energies of a vital democratic life. It thus creates a moral void that opens the way for the intolerant, the trivial, and other misguided moralisms" ("Response" 217). In contrast, moral and religious disagreements can foster a more expansive public reason and a more capacious conception of mutual respect. These expanded notions of public reason and mutual respect provide a portrait of fellow citizens who appreciate, engage, and sometimes contest the opinions of fellow citizens. Such disagreements are important, Sandel argues, because they "better enable us to appreciate the distinctive goods our different lives express" ("Response" 218).

Sandel's response underlines the way in which the meaning of contemporary religious life is fundamentally at issue in the exchange between the two thinkers. If Rawls is to be believed, history has shown, through the exercise of human reason operating under free institutions, that our religious and moral doctrines are converging upon a political standard of the right which is independent of the diverse non-political values of religious and moral doctrines. Rawls thus presupposes the decline of religion in public space as a necessary constituent of a liberal-democratic regime, a decline which is

[10] The weakest of Sandel's examples is his argument regarding the abolitionists. Rawls argues, on conceptual grounds, that the abolitionist cause was one that did not take place in a well-ordered society, but did support the movement towards the rule of public reason (*Political Liberalism* 249-250); such arguments were thus justifiable on the grounds of the unjustness of the regime. In a later amendment, Rawls states such causes should instead be defended on the condition that a "in due course public reasons, given by a reasonable political conception, are presented sufficient to support whatever the comprehensive doctrines are introduced to support" (*Political Liberalism* xlix-lv).

buttressed by a decline in certain kinds of religious beliefs; apart from strands of fundamentalism, the major religions embrace their restriction to the private sphere, and the falling away of those beliefs which are antagonistic to "political justice."

If Sandel is to be believed, the meaning of our moral and religious doctrines is worked out in and through history and public deliberation, and thus our public lives should encourage an expansive debate which attempts to encompass the diversity of our communal attachments through public dialogue. Sandel presupposes, but never articulates, an historical account of religion which focuses less upon the decline of religion in public space and the falling away of certain forms of belief, and more upon fostering robust discussions of the good between members of diverse religious, and areligious, communities. Contained within Sandel's account is the suggestion that our own religious past is not something from which we are to be liberated, but an alternative expression of the good which requires engagement if we are not to forget the way in which our own modern religious beliefs and practices are themselves distinctive expressions of the good.

Consequently, both thinkers imply a crucial link between the religious transformations that have taken place under the shadow of liberalism and contemporary political practice, yet they are fundamentally at odds regarding the meaning of these transformations. Rawls interprets the movement from archaic religious life to modern religions as leading to an inevitable convergence on just principles. For Rawls, then, the meaning of the transformation of our religious life is its uncovering of principles which are right independent of our religious or areligious commitments. Sandel, in contrast, intimates a conception of religion which views the modern transformations in religious

life as one which is not a simple epistemic gain, but rather an expression of novel and diverse expressions of the good. For Sandel, acknowledging and protecting these diverse communities, as well as engendering conversation between our contemporary and historical communities, will allow us to appreciate the distinctive goods which our different lives express. While some may find such a debate "sterile and misleading," what is evident in the exchange between these two thinkers is the fact that the status of religious attachments is not resolved by the liberal culturalist consensus.

The dispute between Rawls and Sandel on the relation of the right to the good also reveals how the problem of religion as it is typically presented in literature on multiculturalism—as a question of whether liberalism can accommodate intolerant or exclusive religious minorities—obscures some of the fundamental questions that contemporary religious diversity poses to modern liberal practice. Does modernization transform religious life in the direction of agreement upon principles of right, such that adherents of particular religions are no longer compelled to express religious or metaphysical arguments in the public sphere? Does our contemporary sense that we are constituted in and through history require a re-engagement with our religious past, or does contemporary political life rest upon liberation from archaic religious forms? In order to resolve the dispute between Rawls and Sandel, what is required is an explicit reply to such questions, a reply which is provided neither within the liberal-communitarian debate, nor in the later liberal culturalist consensus.

Kymlicka and the Liberal-Communitarian Debate

Given such wide-ranging disputes regarding the proper role of religious life in contemporary political practice, and the very meaning of our religious or areligious communal attachments, how was a liberal culturalist consensus possible? The shift in the debate in the 1990s is perhaps most evident in the work of the consensus' most prolific expositor, Will Kymlicka. In order to articulate a liberal culturalist consensus, Kymlicka essentially sidelines the debate regarding the relation between religion, secularization, and liberalism. In the context of Kymlicka's own influential thought, the move to a liberal culturalist consensus can be divided into two distinct parts: first, a rejection of the liberal-communitarian debate as confused and ultimately reducible to liberal claims; second, a revision of traditional liberal theory such that it is able to confront the challenge posed to it by minority claims for minority rights. I conclude this section by showing how Kymlicka's first project, and particularly his critique of Sandel, fails. Kymlicka's liberal theory of minority rights and its own failings will be developed in the subsequent chapter.

Two of Kymlicka's critiques of Sandel are crucial to his reformulation of liberalism: first, his critique of Sandel's claim that deontological liberals misperceive the relationship between the self and its social roles; second, his critique of Sandel's claim that the right is relative to the good. As we have seen, Sandel argues that liberals such as Rawls exaggerate our ability to abstract ourselves from constitutive ends that are only pursued in and through a community. According to Kymlicka, Sandel's argument trades on a crucial ambiguity regarding the communitarian conception of the self. Sandel oscillates between a strong claim and a weak claim, and only the latter is defensible: "The strong claim (that self-discovery replaces judgment) is implausible, and the weak claim

(which allows that a self constituted by its ends can none the less be reconstituted), while attractive, fails to distinguish [Sandel's] position from the liberal view" (*Liberalism, Community, and Culture* 56). By dismantling Sandel's strong claim, Kymlicka attempts to present the liberal conception of the self, a self which can reconstitute any of his or her ends, as the only viable conception.

Kymlicka's critique of the strong claim is essentially a reformulation and defense of the Rawlsian conception of the liberal self. According to Kymlicka, we understand ourselves as prior to our ends only insofar as no end or goal is exempt from possible re-examination. Contra Sandel, liberals do not claim that we can perceive a self wholly prior to, and independent of, its ends. Since the self is not, and cannot be, intelligible without particular ends, ethical reasoning is the process of comparing one potential encumbered self with another potential encumbered self (*Liberalism, Community, and Culture* 53). Furthermore, Kymlicka's rejection of Sandel's strong claim, that ethical reasoning ultimately rests upon self-discovery, is grounded upon a claim regarding our deepest self-understandings. Kymlicka argues, contrary to the communitarian portrait of the self, that we believe every end is potentially revisable. That is, we never believe our communal attachments are beyond question, however deeply implicated we may be in our community.

Yet, in making this argument, Kymlicka demonstrates how his critique of Sandel rests upon a particular, and entirely questionable, account of religious experience. Since many religious ends are allegedly determined by an entity higher than one's self, they are not necessarily experienced as individually revisable ends. Rather, the doubt or skepticism assumed by Kymlicka's account is contrary to certain forms of faith and to

claims of revealed knowledge.[11] For such reasons, Sandel argues that intersubjective and intrasubjective conceptions of the good are not always experienced as revisable. What of those who claim, Sandel might ask, that they cannot imagine renouncing their family, faith, or their higher self? Although we may wish to protect individuals' ability to renounce their religious attachments, it is much more dubious that all sincere religious believers experience their ends as potentially revisable. The claim to revealed knowledge is often precisely the claim that one is certain of one's ends because they are determined by a higher power. Kymlicka must simply assume that the full range of human lives are theoretically accessible to us, *as choices*, or that the answer to the question "who am I?" is not one that is determined by an entity which transcends us. Therefore, Kymlicka's account of choice fails to acknowledge the way in which the affirmation of individual autonomy must dismiss certain choices and constitutive ends; it cannot embrace the individual who claims one's life is not chosen. In short, Kymlicka must sideline the traditional religious way of life as an "implausible" portrait of human life, and thereby ignore the claims being made by individuals who view themselves as members of greater, and unrenounceable, wholes.

Kymlicka's sidelining of the genuine challenges that religion poses to the liberal project is also evident in his discussion of the question of the relation of the right to the good. In this instance, Kymlicka argues, with Dworkin, that the apparent contrast between theories which place the right prior to the good, and those which make the right

[11] To see how questionable Kymlicka's assumption is within certain religious traditions, it is useful to consider one of the most remarkable Biblical stories of divine revelation and divine obedience: Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac (*Genesis* 22 1-19). What is so striking about the example of Abraham is not simply his willingness to sacrifice his miraculously begotten son, but his apparent complete lack of doubt—at least in the telling of *Genesis*—regarding goodness or rightness of this sacrifice; we are told of no questioning or doubting on Abraham's part, but merely of his immediate response to God's call.

relative to the good, is an empty contrast: “Critics and defenders of liberalism share the view that principles of right are a spelling-out of the requirement that we give equal consideration to each person's good” (*Liberalism, Community, and Culture* 21). Kymlicka begins with the claim that Sandel’s critique of Rawls rests upon Rawls’ mischaracterization of the basic contrast between deontological and teleological theories. First, as regards the issue of distribution, Rawls claims utilitarianism is a teleological theory because it assumes the rational in the individual case (maximizing one's good) is rational at the level of society (maximizing the aggregate good). This teleological theory, which attempts to place the good before the right, fails to account for the distinctness of persons: “promoting the well-being of the social organism can't be the goal from which people's rightful claims are derived, since there is no social organism. Since individuals are distinct, they are ends in themselves, not merely agents or representatives of the well-being of social organisms” (*Liberalism, Community, and Culture* 24). According to Kymlicka, the confusion regarding the right and the good in this instance stems from Rawls' conflation of two distinct kinds of utilitarianism. In contrast to Rawls, Kymlicka argues that the most persuasive form of utilitarianism is a deontological theory, which requires the distinct and equal standing of individuals in relation to the good. This utilitarianism is to be contrasted to the less plausible form of utilitarianism appropriated by Rawls, where states of affairs, rather than the good of distinct individuals, are maximized.

This conflation is significant, Kymlicka claims, because the strand of utilitarianism described by Rawls has no real place for the right or the moral. The “states of affairs” utilitarian position is necessarily a non-moral position; such states of affairs

are possibly more beautiful than non-maximized states, but they are not just or right. This is to be contrasted to deontological utilitarianism, which recognizes that right conduct means recognizing the equal standing of individual in relation to the good. Kymlicka draws support for this narrow definition of the moral—that we accord individuals equal consideration—through the second kind of teleological theory referenced by Rawls: Nietzsche's elitist theory of the good. On this view, the good which is maximized is accessible only to the privileged few. According to Kymlicka, a society based upon such a theory might, again, be aesthetically better, but not morally so; hence, Nietzsche's theory is self-consciously "beyond Good and Evil." Thus, in both the case of utilitarianism which exalts certain states of affairs, and Nietzsche's elitist theory, the good, rather than individual people, are being respected; morality drops out of the picture.

However, Kymlicka fails to acknowledge sufficiently that his conception of the right is a contestable conception. The right is relative to the good in communitarian theories because it cannot be reduced to respecting each person's conception of the good. If the community transcends the individual, as communitarians claim, the "moral" entails ways of relating to the community that go beyond Kymlicka's conception of the right, and ways of acting morally or virtuously that are intertwined with the good of communities which transcends us.[12] Thus, if the claims of community are taken at face value, Kymlicka's conception of the debate is one which privileges the right—the right of individuals as interpreters and agents of the good—over the communal good. Kymlicka's

[12] The restriction of the moral, exemplified by Kymlicka's insistence that there is no real debate between Sandel and Rawls, is thus a part of the communitarian critique of contemporary liberalism. Consider, for instance, Taylor's opening claim in *Sources of the Self*: "Much contemporary moral philosophy, particularly but not only in the English-speaking word, has given such a narrow focus to morality that some of the crucial connections I want to draw [regarding selfhood and the good] are incomprehensible in its terms. This moral philosophy has tended to focus on what is right to do rather than on what it is good to be, on defining the content of obligation rather than the nature of the good life; and it has no conceptual place left for a notion of the good as the object of our love or allegiance" (*Sources of the Self* 3).

Rawlsian critique of Sandel therefore stands or falls on the claim that any view of the community or culture as a good which transcends the individual is confused. Again, it is this claim that allows both Rawls and Kymlicka to claim that there is an essential convergence upon the right, which can be satisfied by the claim that we give equal consideration to each person's good. This is also to say that the stability of the principles of right which Rawls and Kymlicka articulate is dependent upon there not being constitutive attachments which transcend us and which are therefore not experienced as renounceable by us as individuals. Consequently, given the objections raised by Sandel, which are ultimately insufficiently addressed by Kymlicka's reformulated Rawls, the liberal principles of right articulated by Rawls and Kymlicka ultimately fail to meet the challenge posed by religious diversity and religious claims to the transcendent.

In sum, the decisive failure in Rawls' and Kymlicka's accounts is the unwillingness or inability to provide a sympathetic account of religious experience and religious practice, and to demonstrate how a sympathetic account would accord with their arguments for the rightness of modern liberalism. What is fundamental to the communitarian critique, and what is forgotten in the consensus, is the belief that the moral cannot be restricted to shared principles of right. The moral, properly understood, requires focusing on who it is good to be, or the nature of the good life, rather than on principles of right which we are obligated to respect (Taylor, *Sources* 3). However, bound up with this concern for the moral is a question which is itself often neglected by communitarians: to what extend does a defense of the moral and the primacy of the good rest upon a theological understanding of human life? As we saw in the thought of

Sandel, the actual substance of the communitarian critique is often liable to be lost in abstractness.

Although the communitarian critique often fails due to the abstractness of its appeals, a failure the communitarian Taylor will eventually attempt to overcome (Chapters 4 and 5), its defense of the moral, and its account of the relation of the right to the good, still presents a special challenge for liberal accounts of religious life. A liberal account of the compatibility of liberalism and religious faith is required to defend Kymlicka's argument that our particular ends are experienced as revisable, and that we are, accordingly, open to doubt regarding their goodness; it is also required to defend Rawls' historical claim in *Political Liberalism* that the history of religion in the modern West has helped uncover indisputable principles of right. Yet, in spite of the necessity of such accounts, neither Rawls nor Kymlicka provide a sustained analysis of religious life and religious experience. Instead, the liberal position articulated by Rawls and Kymlicka rests upon the argument that the moral can be restricted to right principles which are right independent of our visions of the good and of general human flourishing. Consequently, the liberal culturalist consensus does not seem to resolve confusions within the liberal-communitarian consensus as much as sideline the communitarian position. To see how deep this problem runs, we can now turn to the second major component of Kymlicka's political thought, namely his attempt to provide a liberal theory of minority rights.

Chapter 3

Will Kymlicka and the Concept of Culture

Will Kymlicka's reformulation of Rawls, by providing a liberal framework in which to debate minority rights, successfully transformed the liberal-communitarian debates. Since communitarian critiques of liberal theory often rested upon revealing liberalism's inadequacy in confronting minority claims for group rights, Kymlicka's liberal theory of minority rights neutralized, even if it did not dispel, communitarian critiques of contemporary liberalism. Kymlicka's positive contribution to liberalism is therefore essential for understanding the liberal culturalist consensus, and its success in sidelining the challenges to liberal multiculturalism raised in the last chapter. As we shall see, however, Kymlicka's account, while providing a more compelling liberal vision of minority rights claims than theories which ignore or dismiss such claims, fails to address the original challenge to liberalism posed by communitarians such as Sandel and Taylor. Specifically, Kymlicka fails to articulate and defend the essential presuppositions regarding religion which ground his account.

In order to show the significance of Kymlicka's failure to account for religious diversity and religious experience, I conclude this chapter by contrasting Kymlicka's approach to liberal multiculturalism, which views liberal multiculturalism as a means to addressing political problems, to Taylor's cultural account of liberalism, which stresses liberalism's limits as a cultural and communally bound moral aspiration constituted by its religious past. This contrast demonstrates that the current tendency in contemporary scholarship on minority rights, which largely views Kymlicka and Taylor as operating

within a shared liberal multicultural outlook, drastically underemphasizes the differences between the two thinkers on the nature of liberalism and religious diversity. These differences are important, I argue, insofar as they reveal a decisive difference of opinion in the liberal multicultural consensus.

A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights

Kymlicka's liberal theory of minority rights was first developed with reference to the Canadian case. In fact, Trudeau's constitutional design can often be discerned in Kymlicka's thought. Following Trudeau, Kymlicka's major contribution to contemporary liberalism has been to show how liberal individualism is not necessarily valued at the expense of communal or cultural attachments. Liberal individualism, Kymlicka argues, accords with the real importance of our social world, including our self-understandings of our communal relationships (*Liberalism, Community, and Culture* 2 - 3), and can therefore be the basis for justifying minority rights.

Kymlicka's starting point is a conception of liberalism which stresses that our primary interest is to pursue a good life and possess the things which are present in a good life. The preconditions for fulfilling this overriding interest are two-fold: "One is that we lead our life from the inside, in accordance with our beliefs about what gives value to life; the other is that we be free to question those beliefs, to examine them in the light of whatever information and examples and arguments our culture can provide" (*Liberalism, Community, and Culture* 12-13). First, then, a good life must be arrived at through one's own freely chosen decisions. This freedom of choice ensures that one's

beliefs are truly lived as one's own: "our projects are the most important things in our lives, but since our lives have to be led from the inside, in accordance with our beliefs about value, we should have the freedom to form, revise, and act on our plans of life" (*Liberalism, Community, and Culture* 48). However, as Kymlicka notes, since we can be mistaken about the good, a good life must also consist of the right choices about the good. Our *correct* beliefs concerning the good, not simply *our* beliefs, are required for a good life. For this reason, Kymlicka argues, many of the distinctive aspects of a liberal state, such as freedom of speech and freedom of conscience, concern the forming and revising of our opinions; such freedoms are good because they allow us to achieve better conceptions of the good life (*Liberalism, Community, and Culture* 17; *Multicultural Citizenship* 82). Freedom of choice as such is therefore not the most valuable aim for liberals insofar as freedom of choice is empty when divorced from our projects or practices. Rather, freedom of choice is "a precondition for pursuing those projects and practices that are valued for their own sake" (*Liberalism, Community, and Culture* 48).

But what of those ends which appear to us as sacred, ends which rest not upon our good but upon devotion to a higher being which we cannot renounce? As we saw in Kymlicka's critique of Sandel in the previous chapter, religion appears in Kymlicka's thought as a source of ends which we may perceive to be good, but which we may also potentially discard for the sake of pursuing new ends. For instance, Kymlicka notes the way in which liberal freedom of conscience goes beyond protection against forced conversion. Since a liberal society allows for the revision of our ends, liberalism "not only allows individuals the freedom pursue their existing faith, but it allows them to seek new adherents for their faith...or to question the doctrine of their church...or to renounce

their faith entirely and convert to another faith or to atheism" (*Multicultural Citizenship* 82). A liberal society makes possible radical revisions of ends as fundamental as our religious beliefs because our current ends are not always worthy of allegiance. Kymlicka thus echoes the early Rawls' defense of freedom of conscience and religious tolerance, stressing that such freedoms are right insofar as they lead individuals to better conceptions of the good.

Yet, a defense of liberal autonomy does not appear to lead to minority rights, a fact that is underlined by the liberal reticence to acknowledge such rights prior to Kymlicka. Rawlsian liberalism, by respecting individuals as true equals, as "self-originating sources of valid claims," seems unequipped to deal with minority rights, including the rights of religious minorities. On this contemporary liberal view, minority rights respect the community only at the expense of individual freedoms. Since the community is only important to liberals insofar as it contributes to individuals' lives, and does not exist independently of the individuals who constitute it, the community cannot be an autonomous bearer of rights, or make moral claims of its own. In sum, liberal theory appears unable to accommodate minority rights and the moral ontology they presuppose (*Liberalism, Community, and Culture* 140).

Kymlicka's reply, which is foundational for the liberal culturalist consensus, is that since the range of options open to us cannot be chosen, and is determined by our cultural heritage, liberalism must concern itself with securing cultures which provide individuals with a genuine context of choice. In short, a liberal commitment to freedom of choice entails a commitment to the means to this choice, and these means, in the contemporary world at least, involve what Kymlicka calls "societal cultures." Most

fundamentally, a societal culture "provides its members with meaningful ways of life across the full range of human activities, including social, educational, religious, recreational, and economic life, encompassing both public and private spheres" (*Multicultural Citizenship* 76). According to Kymlicka, societal cultures are usually geographically concentrated, bound by a shared language, and are based upon "nations" or "peoples." Kymlicka therefore defends minority rights for cultures only insofar as they provide access to "the full range of human activities." Without such range, minority rights would potentially limit individual choices by preserving stultifying minority cultures alongside more internally diverse and comprehensive cultures.

Similarly, Kymlicka argues that a commitment to societal cultures is essentially a commitment to modernization. According to Kymlicka, societal cultures are promoted by modern states for three main reasons: first, societal cultures are a functional requirement of highly skilled modern economies; second, they reflect the need for solidarity and deep common identity, both of which are required to sustain the individual sacrifices which underpin modern states; finally, a common societal culture aids equality of opportunity through provisions such as standardized public education (*Multicultural Citizenship* 76 - 77). Due to the diversity of the modern world, states with national minorities can and often should protect more than one societal culture within its boundaries, thereby allowing individuals which belong to minority societal cultures full means to self-realization.

In sum, there is a clear reason for liberals to care about the fate of cultures, and to support minority rights: a rich and secure societal culture is the means to becoming aware of our life options, and examining their value critically. The "culturalist" aspect of liberal

culturalism is thus worthwhile in an instrumental sense. Societal cultures allow us to become fully autonomous human beings. Like Trudeau, then, Kymlicka provides an instrumental account of language and history. Only through language and history do we comprehend human actions, but language and history are themselves only "media" and "preconditions" of critical thought (*Liberalism, Community, and Culture* 165). Language and history are therefore not constitutive ends, as per Sandel, but means to comprehending our life options. Our societal culture is only an end in the secondary sense that it is the means to intelligent judgments about our ends. And while it may be possible to depart from one's cultural heritage, to revise the most fundamental of our ends, "we should treat access to one's culture as something that people can be expected to want, whatever their more particular conception of the good" (*Multicultural Citizenship* 86). We should be entitled access to our culture, because the possibility of leaving this culture is sufficiently rare as to be an unreasonable expectation for most people to fulfill.

Can Kymlicka's instrumental theory of minority rights sufficiently accommodate majority and minority religious groups? Kymlicka states explicitly that only liberalized religions can be embraced in liberal multicultural societies. Kymlicka's multiculturalism thus poses liberal restrictions upon religious beliefs and practices. Kymlicka's restriction of religious life is best illustrated by his distinction between external protections and internal restrictions. External protections are protections of groups from domination by other groups, and thus strictly concern inter-group relations. Such external protections of groups are required, Kymlicka argues, when they promote fairness among groups. In contrast, internal restrictions are defined by Kymlicka as those requirements placed upon members of groups that restrict liberal rights and freedoms "in the name of cultural

tradition or religious orthodoxy" (*Multicultural Citizenship* 36). According to Kymlicka, internal restrictions, at least insofar as they limit the rights of group members to question traditional authority and practices, and restrict their ability to revise their beliefs about the good life, should be decried by liberals. Kymlicka's only caveat is that liberalism must be internalized by groups—whether such groups are foreign countries or national minorities within one's borders[1]—and thus transitions to liberalism should be encouraged through negotiation rather than through force. Therefore, since "a liberal view requires freedom within the minority group, and equality between the minority and majority groups" (*Multicultural Citizenship* 152), a liberal theory of minority rights cannot encompass the claims of all minority groups; only liberalized groups can justly expect liberal multiculturalism's promise of external protections from domination by other groups.

Kymlicka's defense of liberalism in the face of illiberal religious claims raises two related, but ultimately separate, questions. First, if liberalism is the standard by which cultures and religions are assessed, to what extent can such a theory be said to be multicultural? In other words, does a commitment to liberalism necessarily entail a shallow embrace of cultural "diversity," since some cultures do not respect individual autonomy or do not respect and tolerate other cultures? Kymlicka is frank that liberalism is the animating ideal of his political and theoretical project, yet he is largely dismissive of the claim that his account misses something substantial by being insufficiently multicultural. According to Kymlicka, cultural diversity as a liberal educational goal is

[1] One of Kymlicka's important distinctions in *Multicultural Citizenship*, which is largely beyond the scope of the present analysis, is the distinction between multination and polyethnic states. National minorities, which can exist due to conquest and colonization, or through agreements to create a federation, often require permanent political rights. In contrast, polyethnic diversity, which stems from voluntary immigration, typically only requires recognition of immigrants' ethnic identity and the ordinary modification of the laws of mainstream society (*Multicultural Citizenship* 10 - 26). Due to their special political status, illiberal national minorities should not be forced to accede to the principles of the majority in the same fashion as immigrants (*Multicultural Citizenship* 167 - 168).

insufficient to defend minority rights, because diversity within cultures, rather than diversity between cultures, expands individual life choices. Moreover, arguments for cultural diversity imply a duty on the part of citizens to preserve their traditional culture, a duty which can quickly devolve into illiberal internal restrictions (*Multicultural Citizenship* 122 - 123).

Kymlicka's confidence in the liberal project,[2] and his reply to objections based upon a belief in the good of "cultural diversity" reveals a second, less prominent, question at the heart of liberal multiculturalism: what are the effects of liberalization upon "cultures"? Alternatively, is contemporary liberalism, which presupposes some form of modernization, itself a constitutive moral aspiration which has a transformative effect upon cultures and religions? As noted in the previous chapter, the communitarian position is that freedom of conscience and religious toleration are not neutral with regard to the character and content of religious beliefs, but are themselves constitutive ideals which shape the character and range of liberal religions. Can Kymlicka address this communitarian conception of religious toleration?

Cultural and Acultural Theories of Modernity

We can better appreciate what is at stake in Kymlicka's portrait of culture, and his distance from communitarians such as Sandel, by turning to Charles Taylor's distinction

[2] Kymlicka's confidence in liberalism as a theoretical and political doctrine is exemplified by his reaction to the conflict between tolerance and individual freedom of conscience: "there is a genuine conflict here, which we need to face honestly. If we wish to defend individual freedom of conscience, and not just group tolerance, we must reject the communitarian idea that people's ideas are fixed and beyond rational revision. We must endorse the traditional liberal belief in personal autonomy" (*Multicultural Citizenship* 161). Significantly, Kymlicka's honest confrontation of the conflict is not an acknowledgement of principles which might be in tension with one another, or which might reveal a real challenge to liberalism, but a confident endorsement of one principle (individual autonomy) at the expense of another (group toleration).

between acultural and cultural theories of modernity. As we shall see (Chapter 5), Taylor's distinction is at the heart of his account of secularization and "subtraction stories," or "stories of modernity in general, and secularity in particular, which explain them by human beings having lost, or sloughed off, or liberated themselves from certain earlier, confining horizon, or illusion, or limitations of knowledge" (*A Secular Age* 22). Moreover, Taylor's distinction arguably reveals a distance between himself and Kymlicka often missed by commentators on the two thinkers, particularly on the question of religion and its relation to modernity. Insofar as this difference between the two thinkers reflects radically contrasting visions of the meaning and limits of liberal multiculturalism, it is worth developing in some detail.

According to Taylor, acultural theories of modernity, which are predominant in the social sciences, describe the changes brought about by modernity as a culture-neutral operation. More specifically, acultural theories of modernity describe "an operation that is not defined in terms of the specific cultures it carries us from and to, but [the operation] is rather seen as of a type that any traditional culture could undergo" ("Two Theories of Modernity" 24). On this view, particular cultures may be more or less amenable to transformation, yet modernity itself is not constituted by the particular cultures undergoing transformation. An example of an acultural theory of modernity, and even a paradigm case, "would be one that conceives of modernity as the growth of reason, defined in various ways: as the growth of scientific consciousness, or the development of a secular outlook, or the rise of instrumental rationality, or an ever-clearer distinction between fact-finding and evaluation" ("Two Theories" 24). Yet, acultural theories are not necessarily positive stories regarding the triumph of reason and the decline of myths

and confining illusions; negative theories of modernity have also been predominantly acultural. In negative narratives, "modernity is characterized by the loss of the horizon; by a loss of roots; by the hubris that denies human limits and denies our dependence on history or God, which places unlimited confidence in the powers of frail human reason; by a trivializing self-indulgence which has no stomach for the heroic dimension of life, and so on" ("Two Theories" 25). In both negative and positive narratives, the particular vision of modernity being espoused marches on independently of the particular cultures it affects.

In contrast, a cultural theory of modernity, Taylor argues, "characterizes the transformations that have issued in the modern West mainly in terms of the rise of a new culture…with its own specific understandings, for example, of person, nature, the good, to be contrasted to all others, including its own predecessor civilization" ("Two Theories" 24). Cultures, in this particular sense, are more than a context of choice for individuals. They are entities bound by often mutually untranslatable languages, with distinct practices embodying aspirations and conceptions of virtue and vice. Accordingly, a cultural theory of modernity opens up the possibility that the very evaluation of the goodness of modernity cannot be captured by a general theory encompassing all cases. Since crucial features of modernity "develop under the pressure of different demands and aspirations in different civilizations, [and] we are more and more living in a world of 'multiple modernities'" (*A Secular Age* 21), the goodness of particular modernities must first be viewed on their own terms.

Consequently, Taylor argues that acultural readings of modernity miss something essential about modernity. Acultural theories claim that we behave as we do because we

have liberated ourselves from certain illusions, or, on the negative reading, because we have been divorced from perennial truths. In contrast, Taylor claims that Western modernity is the result of creative and constructed self-understandings and practices, meaning that Western modernity cannot be explained in terms of what is permanent in human life. Therefore, acultural theories obscure the way in which Western modernity is animated by its own particular conception of the good, a particular conception among viable others. Western modernity is not simply what remains after we have dispensed with old illusions or myths. The error of missing the positive and novel vision of the good which informs Western modernity tends in two separate directions: on the one hand, we mistake a culture or range of cultures peculiar to the modern West as a universal and ineluctable consequence of a single and unified Enlightenment package, such as the belief that once technology is on the scene religious faith necessarily falls into decline; on the other hand, we fail to see that facets of the modern Enlightenment, particularly those interwoven with our understandings of science and religion, are not perennial features of human life, but part of the transformation to modernity and the making of an identity in some sense particular to the West.

The special importance of this fact is illustrated by the cultural account of modernity which Taylor presents in the final section of "The Politics of Recognition." In this final section, Taylor emphasizes that the problem of justification of liberal practice has become acute insofar as the increasing porousness of democratic societies has led to the existence, within our borders, of citizens who "belong to a culture that calls into question our philosophical boundaries. The challenge is to deal with their sense of marginalization without compromising our political principles" ("The Politics of

Recognition" 63). Taylor argues that the reply, "this is how we do things here," is inadequate in this context because it rests upon contempt for alternative cultures and their own distinct conceptions of the good.

According to Taylor, the typical, and acultural, response to this challenge is to appeal to "difference-blind" liberalism. On this view, the solution to the problem is properly distinguishing "between what is public and what is private, for instance, or between politics and religion" ("The Politics of Recognition" 62). Religious disputes, or disputes which rest upon religious grounds, can thus be solved by denying their access to the public realm. This is, of course, roughly the solution Rawls provides for religious strife. Yet, as Taylor notes, this claim of cultural neutrality does not square with the empirical fact of the matter, as demonstrated by the tensions arising between liberalism and religion. For instance, to restrict Islam to the private sphere is to modify it, which is to say that, in the case of Islam, the public-private distinction is itself not neutral. Thus, liberalism, from the vantage point of Islam, has clear Christian roots: "as many Muslims are well aware, Western liberalism is not so much an expression of the secular, postreligious outlook that happens to be popular among liberal *intellectuals* as a more organic outgrowth of Christianity....The division of church and state goes back to the earliest days of Christian civilization" ("The Politics of Recognition" 62). As a result of this tension between Islam and a range of liberal cultures which can trace their lineage to Christian thought and practice, Taylor underlines an important consequence of his cultural account of liberalism: liberalism is, and can only be, the expression of one range of cultures.

The lesson, Taylor declares, is that liberalism is not culturally neutral; it is a "fighting creed" ("The Politics of Recognition" 62). Such substantive distinctions, Taylor argues, are inevitable in politics. Unlike Kymlicka, who views liberalization as a phenomenon which does not necessarily produce cultural loss, Taylor is explicit that liberalism is constitutive of cultures, and thus the character of liberal cultures is what is truly at issue. In other words, liberal culture and the modern vision upon which it rests promotes certain kinds of human flourishing over others, and any defense of liberalism must therefore ultimately rest upon a defense of these aspirations. Moreover, Taylor's mention of a fighting creed suggests that the communitarian commitment to "dialogue" is, at the same time, an acknowledgment of the conflict which rests at the heart of political life. Insofar as liberalism can only encompass a range of cultures, and is itself a cultural aspiration, its victory over other political forms will also entail, at least on some level, the loss of certain virtues or forms of flourishing that can be engendered by these alternative political forms. Honestly confronting this fact, rather than hoping for cultural accommodation through an expansive conception of "societal cultures," is part of the commitment to a cultural interpretation of liberalism.

Kymlicka's Theory of Minority Rights as an Acultural Theory of Modernity

Kymlicka is the most prominent expositor of the liberal multicultural consensus. His articulation of a liberal theory of rights sheds crucial insight into the force of group rights as a liberal ideal. Like Trudeau, Kymlicka provides a defense of cultures as the means to our own self-realization. And like Trudeau, he identifies this instrumental

defense of culture as the defense of distinctly modern cultures: only modern, societal cultures provide human beings with access to the full range of human lives. Curiously, however, Kymlicka's defense of minority rights and multiculturalism rest upon what Taylor would presumably call an acultural theory of modernity. Kymlicka restricts liberal multiculturalism to an ideal which advances, in the grand sweep of history, independent of the character of any particular culture or set of cultures. Thus, in Kymlicka's theory, all cultural goods and human ends worth preserving are either bulwarks of, or at least consistent with, liberalism; the liberalization of a culture allows for the diversification of choices regarding the good.[3] As we shall see, it is his implicit understanding of modernity which allows Kymlicka to embrace liberalism and liberal minority rights, as a solution to the moral issues raised by minority claims, without reserve. However, I will also argue that Kymlicka, in departing from Trudeau's anti-nationalism, and Trudeau's hope that we, as individuals, could eventually liberate ourselves from our original cultural comportments, fails to acknowledge the limitations which cultures often place upon our intellectual horizons. Accordingly, Kymlicka fails to acknowledge what is required for his implicitly acultural theory of modernity to be persuasive, namely an account of the self which leads beyond culture to an understanding of what is permanent in human life.

In an important footnote in "The Politics of Recognition," Taylor raises Kymlicka's account of culture in *Liberalism, Community, and Culture* as a liberal theory

[3] For this reason, Kymlicka's position has been criticized by a number of commentators for ignoring the real challenges to liberalism posed by illiberal cultures: his apparent defense of culture restricts itself to those cultures which already conform to liberal principles; more radically, his portrait of culture, by divorcing culture from shared ends, denies the unique force of cultural claims which attempt to defend particular cultures against so-called liberal hegemony. For instance, see: Kukathas, "Are There Any Cultural Rights?"; Lenihan; Taylor, "Can Liberalism Be Communitarian?" 257-262.

of the politics of difference which attempts to preserve a theory of liberal neutrality. Taylor's dismissal of Kymlicka's account rests upon the same argument that Taylor invokes as a rebuttal of Trudeau's theory of multiculturalism: what is crucial about cultural claims is that they are not voiced in purely instrumental terms, and this crucial fact goes unrecognized in Kymlicka's system. Kymlicka's account is sufficient for protecting existing peoples, but his instrumental account insufficiently addresses the expressed desire of minority cultures to project their culture into the future. In sum, Taylor argues that Kymlicka's account "doesn't justify measures designed to ensure survival through indefinite future generations. For the populations concerned, however, that is what is at stake. We need only think of the historical resonance of 'la survivance' among French Canadians" ("The Politics of Recognition" 41n). On Taylor's account, cultural survival, and especially the survival of the particular *character* of a culture, is at issue in minority claims for group rights, and adequately recognizing this self-understanding of cultural groups is essential to understanding claims for minority rights. Taylor rests much upon the French-Canadian desire to see their culture preserved beyond their lifetimes because this desire suggests that the claim for minority rights is not simply an instrumental claim. In this case, culture does more than provide a context of choice for individuals, it is a good which cannot be reduced to the individuals which constitute it.

Kymlicka's instrumental stance toward culture helps reveal his acultural account of modernity and liberalization. In making the case for cultural membership as a good of modern liberalism, Kymlicka self-consciously diminishes the value of the particular

character of cultures. In his breakthrough work, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture*, this argument is found in a particularly strong form:

> In one common usage, culture refers to the character of a historical community. On this view, changes in the norms, values, and their attendant institutions in one's community (e.g. membership in churches, political parties, etc.) would amount to loss of one's culture. However, I use culture in a very different sense, to refer to the cultural community, or cultural structure, itself. On this view, the cultural community continues to exist even when its members are free to modify the character of the culture, should they find its traditional ways of life no longer worthwhile. (*Liberalism, Community, and Culture* 166 - 167)

Although Kymlicka drops this distinction between the character of a culture, and its structure, in his later and more fully developed defense of group rights, *Multicultural Citizenship*, the concept of societal cultures invoked in this later work still defines away the problem posed to liberalism by the claims for minority rights. As we have seen, culture, and particularly language, is instrumental with regard to the specific choices individuals make concerning the good life. Kymlicka, echoing Trudeau, argues that language is merely a means or medium, and not constitutive of the good. Since cultures are divorced from their particular character, individual members of cultures cannot lament the loss of particular aspects of their culture, nor take measures to ensure one's culture survives beyond one's lifetime. What, however, is the source of Kymlicka's confidence in the instrumental character of all cultures?

Kymlicka can view the basic process of liberalization as straightforwardly compatible with the protection of minority cultures because his conception of culture and cultural membership rests upon a more fundamental acultural theory of modernity. This is particularly evident in his interpretation of Quebec's liberalization. Kymlicka claims the Québécois possess a societal culture (*Multicultural Citizenship* 79 - 80), and are therefore deserving of cultural protection if their culture is endangered. However,

contrary to the claims of Québécois nationalists, Kymlicka emphasizes that the massive transformation in the character of French-Canadian culture, beginning with the Quiet Revolution, does not constitute a loss of "culture" in the relevant sense. Rather, "the existence of a French-Canadian cultural community itself was never in question, never threatened with unwanted extinction or assimilation as aboriginal communities are currently threatened" (*Liberalism, Community, and Culture* 167). Kymlicka's concern in *Liberalism, Community, and Culture* are aboriginal rights precisely because their culture is endangered in a way that Québécois culture is not. Thus, far from decrying the loss of traditional French-Canadian culture, Kymlicka describes the loss of a shared conception of the good life in Quebec as representative of the diversity and freedom that arrives with the liberalization of a traditional culture:

> Before the Quiet Revolution, the Québécois generally shared a rural, Catholic, conservative, and patriarchal conception of the good. Today, after a rapid period of liberalization, most people have abandoned this traditional way of life, and Québécois society now exhibits all the diversity that any modern society contains—e.g. Atheists and Catholics, gays and heterosexuals, urban yuppies and rural farmers, socialists and conservatives, etc. To be a 'Québécois' today, therefore, simply means being a participant in the francophone society of Quebec. (*Multicultural Citizenship* 87)

That Québécois now have as much in common with one another as they do with anglophones in the rest of Canada, or anglophones in the United States, is thus praised as evidence of liberalism's diversifying effects. Québécois society still contains Catholics, conservatives, and rural farmers, but it now also contains the diverse ways of life present in liberal societies; there is no necessary antagonism or incompatibility between such ways of life. In short, the modernization and liberalization of Quebec has led to a full range of life choices in the province, making it a societal culture in the fullest sense of the term.

According to Kymlicka, then, the liberalization of cultures does not lead to their dissolution. Liberalization of cultures involves liberation from constrained horizons. For this reason, liberalization is a goal that is not restricted to the West or a particular tradition, but a goal which should be universal. Kymlicka admits that liberalization may not always be possible, but he is clear that liberalization does not in any way dissolve the cultures which it affects: "it is worth remembering that all existing liberal nations had illiberal pasts, and their liberalization required a prolonged process of institutional reform. To assume that any culture is inherently illiberal, and incapable of reform, is ethnocentric and ahistorical" (*Multicultural Citizenship* 94). Liberalization therefore does not entail substantial cultural loss, but is, in fact, a necessary step for the broadening and diversification of cultural life.

As we have seen, Kymlicka presents modernity and liberalization as a single process which liberates rather than confines individual members of cultures. According to Taylor, this way of speaking and thus thinking about tensions between traditional cultures and liberalization potentially obfuscates the diversity of modern cultures. The assumption that liberalization is necessarily good is potentially an ethnocentric assumption, insofar as it assumes liberalism is compatible with all worthwhile cultures. Accordingly, Taylor suggests that even speaking of a single problem of modernity obfuscates the plurality of modernity, and thus we may "need to speak of multiple modernities, the plural reflecting the fact that non-Western cultures have modernized in their own ways, and cannot be properly understood if we try to grasp them in a general theory that was originally designed with the Western case in mind" ("Modern Social Imaginaries" 91). Taylor's suggestion is noteworthy for two reasons. First, Taylor is

explicit that the possible multiplicity of modernity can be discerned or at least explored *in our times*. Taylor intimates that it is somehow the uniqueness of our historical situation which has made the failings of a single, homogeneous, and acultural understanding of modernity evident. Second, Taylor makes clear that the inability to account for the multiplicity of modernity is a failing of general theory itself. If acultural theories cannot sufficiently capture the diversity of modernization, such as being unable to capture the actual claims of individuals seeking to preserve their cultures, they ignore essential aspects of human reality. Consequently, Taylor argues contemporary liberalism and its approach to cultural diversity often serves to obscure a theoretical challenge which the practice of modernity has helped reveal. What is left to explain, then, is how Taylor can provide a rival response to this challenge.

A Fusion of Horizons?

Modern liberal democratic regimes, Taylor argues, are faced with a historically unique challenge. What is novel for modern liberal states is that the demand for recognition is now an explicit facet of political discourse. Members of minority cultures explicitly seek to struggle against an imposed self-image. Accordingly, one of the main reasons cited for political and educational reform in contemporary politics is that the exclusion of certain cultures harms those who belong to excluded cultures. Specifically, some argue that since all cultures would be placed on more or less the same footing, if not for the distorting lens of hegemonic cultures, we owe equal respect to all cultures.

The presumption of this chain of argument—at least according to Taylor[4]—is that cultures which animated large or numerous peoples over long stretches have something to say to all human beings. That Christianity, Islam, or Buddhism, possess cultural merits worthy of universal recognition seems to be proven by their ability to speak to a diverse number of people at various moments in time.

In response, Taylor argues that the "equality of cultures" doctrine only makes sense as a moral presumption, and this presumption needs to be demonstrated in the concrete. Like Trudeau, Rawls, and Kymlicka, then, Taylor does not easily concede that all cultures are deserving of recognition or support. Where Taylor differs drastically from these liberal thinkers, however, is in setting concrete, historical demonstrations as the standard for determining cultural worth. In fact, Taylor's portrait of intercultural relations, and particularly his emphasis upon the grounds and possibility of intercultural communication, is relatively unique among theorists discussing multiculturalism. The principal reason Taylor cites for this need to demonstrate equality in the concrete is a theoretical one: *ex ante,* we might have only the foggiest idea of what the contribution from an alien culture might be. According to Taylor, what is required is what Gadamer names a "fusion of horizons," where "we learn to move in a broader horizon, within which what we have formerly taken for granted as the background to valuation can be situated as one possibility alongside the different background of the formerly unfamiliar culture" ("The Politics of Recognition" 67). Hence, Taylor straddles two apparently contrary positions: on the one hand, he attempts to maintain a position of moral realism

[4] Susan Wolf notes the limitations of Taylor's portrait of education; one of the political motivations for education has always been "learning to understand *ourselves*, *our* history, *our* environment, *our* language, *our* political system" ("Comment" 84).

as regards cultural matters; on the other hand, he resists acultural accounts of modernity, which potentially view such moral realities as being independent of culture.

To see what Taylor has in mind by this meeting of cultures, it is necessary to unpack what he means by a "fusion of horizons," and the possibility and desirability of intercultural communication. In "Comparison, History, Truth," Taylor suggests that we must begin, as Westerners, by noting the problems which beset attempts to understand alternative cultures from a natural-science tradition:

> Since the seventeenth-century, the progress of natural science has been inseparable from our separating ourselves from our own perspective, even from the human perspective as such, in order to come as close as possible to 'the view from nowhere.'…The aim is to identify and then neutralize those features of the way the world appears which depend on our particular makeup. ("Comparison, History, and Truth" 148)

Such a procedure is impossible in human science: "the aim of understanding should not be to surmount or escape our own point of view, in order to 'get inside' another" ("Comparison, History, and Truth" 148), because cultural analyses or human science are necessarily different in form than natural science. In order to make other people intelligible, both in our everyday lives and in theoretical contexts, we constantly draw upon an understanding of our culture and our situation. This often inarticulate understanding "sets the forms and standards of intelligibility for us" ("Comparison, History, and Truth" 149).

Are we therefore necessarily reduced to ethnocentric analyses? Gadamer's argument, which Taylor appropriates, is that our own understanding can change through genuine contact with foreign cultures. When one is challenged by a foreign culture, one meets this challenge by enlarging one's own understanding. One refashions the forms and limits of one's previous understanding by articulating what was previously

inarticulate in one's "home" understanding, and by testing this understanding's limits in new contexts:

> This means that [one] articulate[s] what were formerly limits to intelligibility, in order to see them in a new context, no longer as inescapable structures of human motivation, but as one in a range of possibilities. That is why other-understanding changes self-understanding, and in particular prizes us loose from some of the most fixed contours of our former culture. ("Comparison, History, and Truth" 149)

In such analyses, the "home" understanding will always, and must always, play a role. This necessary role for our own understanding suggests that understanding the other is always a matter of comparison. A greater ability to understand the other is made possible by increased comparisons and contrasts, or by recognition that we cannot simply deny or neutralize our home understanding. This way of proceeding, of course, entails a possible distortion of the other culture, but the only way "out" of this situation is to further compare the new limits of one's horizon. Imagining a negation of our home understanding is to misunderstand how intercultural communication takes place. In such intercultural dialogue, we seek, and should understand ourselves as seeking, a more encompassing understanding that can englobe the other without distortion. In sum, Taylor's model suggests how ethnocentrism can be overcome in principle, and, at the same time, how practical difficulties will arise from any particular attempt to overcome ethnocentrism. The difficulty in overcoming ethnocentrism "follows immediately from the fact that the exigencies of understanding the other may require us to relativize features of our own self-understanding that we cherish. Some levels of understanding of some others will be resisted fiercely if unconsciously" ("Comparison, History, and Truth" 149).

Gadamer's image of how such communication takes place, is that of a conversation, which has as its endpoint a common mind or understanding (*eine Verständigung*), even when the other is one who cannot reply (such as an historical culture). This common mind is a fusion of horizons, rather than a transcending of them, which would allow both us and the other to exist undistortively. A conversation between Christians and Muslims, for instance, might achieve a common mind, a language in which the differences of both could be expressed. Yet, this common mind would not be an "objective, point-of-view-less language of religion" ("Comparison, History, and Truth" 151). As a result, a conversation with a different religious tradition or point of view, such as Buddhism, would necessarily be compelled to start the process anew. According to Taylor, the Gadamer perspective captures what is gained through cultural communication, while acknowledging that narrowness in other areas of our understanding will still remain. This perspective:

> Allows us the idea of an omega point, as it were, when all times and cultures of humanity would have been able to exchange and come to an undistortive horizon for all of them. But even this would still be only *de facto* universal. If it turned out that one culture had been left out by mistake, the process would have to start again. The only possible ideal of objectivity in this domain is that of inclusiveness. The inclusive perspective is never attained *de jure*. You only get there de facto, when everybody is on board. ("Comparison, History, and Truth" 151)

One may object, of course, that such a standpoint is impossible insofar as we experience the other as fundamentally distorted and strange. A different way of stating this objection is to claim the comparisons or contrasts which make possible a common language are merely articulations of things formerly taken as given by us, and thus must always remain our own. However, as Taylor argues, the strangeness of the other is almost impossible to

sustain in practice. In practice, we do make sense of the strangeness of the other in reference to aspects of our own lives.

This capacity to overcome the strangeness of the other is aided by the role of validity claims in understanding other cultures. Taylor, again drawing upon Gadamer, argues that validity claims of some sort cannot be separated from understanding. When communicating with others, we cannot help but have a view of the world in which they act. We understand something or someone in reference to a background reality. Consequently, in our explanations of human behavior, we rule out phenomena which we cannot believe exist. In attempting to explain the behavior of a tribe that believes in magic or giants, we must presume the non-existence of magic or giants. Although we may feel superior for this reason, this feeling of superiority obfuscates the real possibility of intercultural communication in such situations. For instance, "when we begin to place magic differently, and we see it for instance as an interpretation of the moral significance of things, and their relation to human purposes, we see it all in an altered light. The people no longer seem just wrong, inferior to us in knowledge" ("Comparison, History, and Truth" 153). Hence, we are not wholly superior, because seeing magic in this light means "there are things [those who believe in magic] know how to do, perhaps ways to come to terms with and treat the stresses of their lives, ways we seem to have lost and could benefit by. The balance of superiority is not all on our side" ("Comparison, History, and Truth" 153). Such an explanation makes the alien culture comprehensible, while moving us farther away from our own understanding; in this way, it is an example of fusing horizons. The force of such an explanation is also buttressed by independent moral force: it is more satisfactory because it is less ethnocentric.

This role of validity in intercultural communication returns us to the politics of recognition. As Taylor notes, to demand recognition, as something that is desired prior to concrete evaluation, is to paradoxically advocate the imposition of a homogenizing standard. To demand equal recognition before the fact is to assume that standards of worth are already sufficiently known by the subject making the evaluation:

> If all cultures have made a contribution of worth, it cannot be that these are identical, or even embody the same kind of worth. To expect this would be to vastly underestimate the differences. In the end, the presumption of worth imagines a universe in which different cultures complement each other with quite different kinds of contribution. The picture not only is compatible with, but demands judgments of, superiority-in-a-certain-respect. ("The Politics of Recognition" 71)

Thus, the starting presumption of equal worth, as a presumption, might be demandable as a right—to avoid the ethnocentric derision of alien cultures—but not the concrete judgment of equal worth. A judgment of worth must ultimately appeal to "something independent of our own wills and desires" ("The Politics of Recognition" 69), and thus must make a validity claim of some sort.

As Taylor notes, the neo-Nietzschean response to such validity claims, that there is no "objectivity" to which one may appeal, is particularly confused in such matters, since the issue of recognition turns on the possibility of judgment. If such judgments are impossible, the coherence of demands for recognition from others falls away. Moreover, those who would attempt to "escape this whole nexus of hypocrisy by turning the entire issue into one of power and counterpower," and thus make the issue one of taking sides, miss "the driving force of this kind of politics, which is precisely the search for recognition and respect" ("The Politics of Recognition" 70). An honest confrontation with the contemporary politics of recognition therefore leads to an awareness of the way

in which our cultural claims for recognition hope to correspond to a reality which is independent of our own personal wants or desires. Consequently, Taylor's account of a fusion of horizons ultimately requires a defense of moral realism, and explicating Taylor's novel defense of moral realism will be the subject of the subsequent chapter (Chapter 4). At this point, it is worth returning to our comparison of Kymlicka and Taylor to see how the two thinkers provide drastically different ways of viewing liberal multiculturalism.

The Myth of a Consensus: Differentiating Kymlicka and Taylor

Contemporary literature on minority rights has generally placed Kymlicka and Taylor within a shared liberal multicultural consensus, viewing the two figures as liberal multiculturalism's most important Canadian theorists. This interpretation is in part fostered by the tendency of Taylor, and especially Kymlicka, to cite the other's work approvingly. However, Taylor's distinction between cultural and acultural accounts of modernity, when brought to bear on Kymlicka's work, demonstrates that the difference between the two thinkers is far from superficial, a difference which sheds light on the contrary tendencies one can often find within the so-called consensus.[5] Where Taylor suggests that our theoretical starting point should be a perspective of wonder and openness to the other, a perspective which helps facilitate fusions of horizons, Kymlicka begins with a certainty regarding liberal principles, and its ability to accommodate all

[5] This tendency of the liberal multicultural consensus to contain contrary strands has been noted in the literature, yet its full import has not been acknowledged. For instance, see Goodin, 289 - 303. What Goodin fails to acknowledge is the extent to which the openness to diversity that is praised within the liberal multicultural literature might lead beyond liberal multicultural models.

worthwhile cultures, as the basis for a theory of minority rights. This contrast underscores a second significant point of difference: whereas Kymlicka largely articulates liberal theoretical models by which to meet the demands of political practice, Taylor largely articulates our contemporary political dilemmas as a means to demonstrating the more fundamental theoretical puzzles and questions which are contained within this practice. Rather than being within a recognizable consensus, then, Kymlicka and Taylor represent two distinct ways of thinking about the challenge of religious diversity, a challenge which is of decisive importance for determining the meaning and viability of liberal multiculturalism.

Kymlicka's certainties regarding liberalism, and his concern for liberal multiculturalism as a system of applied ethics, come at a crucial cost. Unlike Taylor, Kymlicka is unwilling to acknowledge the genuine problems posed to liberal practice by claims of diversity. Kymlicka portrays all religious and cultural claims which do not accord with liberal principles as necessarily confused, with little in the way of engagement with these actual religious and cultural claims. Moreover, Kymlicka weds his account to the kinds of claims—such as the necessity of liberal nationalism, and the inescapability of our home cultures—which can be the source of resistance to liberal multiculturalism, and which rest uneasily with his acultural account of modernity. As we saw in our analysis of Trudeau, acultural accounts of modernity, when most compelling, attempt to explain the rise of modernity through the realization of what is permanent in human life. Trudeau's critique of nationalism, his account of the liberation from our cultural comportments which a rich and multicultural public life enables, and his historical account of the rise of modern culture, is meant to reveal the permanent truth

that individuals, rather than nations, are truly sovereign. In contrast to Trudeau, who openly aspires to an acultural perspective, Kymlicka seems unwilling or unable to acknowledge the theoretical demands of an acultural account of modernity, instead utilizing a conception of societal cultures and their inescapability which only clouds his acultural liberalism.

But isn't Taylor himself a self-described liberal, insofar as his communitarian politics is meant to protect certain liberal rights as sacrosanct? As we noted in Chapter 1, Taylor's political advocacy of liberal principles, while in some sense a sincere articulation of our modern moral attachments, often seems to rest more upon Taylor's concern with the fragility of political practice than with the unquestioned supremacy of liberal rights as such. This concern with the fragility of our political principles is, of course, consonant with his cultural interpretation of modernity. In contrast to Kymlicka, Taylor's account of rights-based liberalism which can make space for transcendent collective goals does not rest upon a straightforward affirmation of liberal principles, but upon an awareness of the tensions and difficulties which attend our commitment to diverse and sometimes contradictory principles.

The tensions and difficulties that are present in contemporary liberal politics arguably lead Taylor to a religious politics which cannot be reconciled with Kymlicka's liberal theory of minority rights. Although Taylor's moderate defense of theism can only fully be understood in the context of Taylor's recent attempts to give an account of secularization and the continued vitality of the transcendent—attempts which will be the subject of the following two chapters—a glimpse of the significance of religious experience for evaluating Taylor's historical account can been seen by returning to the

final section of "The Politics of Recognition." Taylor, when discussing his premise regarding the "presumption of equality" required for intercultural communication and evaluation, remarks that "the presumption is by no means unproblematic, and involves something like an act of faith" ("The Politics of Recognition" 66).[6] However, Taylor never explicitly addresses why this act of faith should extend to the belief in a future imagined harmony between cultures, particularly when the real conflicts between cultures in the modern world are painfully apparent. One reason for Taylor's optimism appears to be that since we know the experience of making sense of the strangeness of the other, we know intercultural communication is possible. Yet, what is still to be explained is why this experience of intercultural communication should extend to a faith in a future harmony between cultures. After all, Taylor himself notes the conflict between liberalism and those strands of Islam which do not separate the public and private; the possibility for intercultural communication might be of a very limited sort.

Taylor briefly raises a theological possibility, namely the account of Herder, who "had a view of divine providence, according to which all this variety of culture was not a mere accident but was meant to bring about a greater harmony" (72). However, Taylor immediately departs from this rationale, and attempts to make the argument on other grounds:

> One could argue that it is reasonable to suppose that cultures that have provided the horizon of meaning for large numbers of human beings, of diverse characters and temperaments, over a long period of time are almost certainly to have something that deserves our admiration and respect, even if it is accompanied by much that we have to abhor and reject. (72 - 73)

[6] Unless noted otherwise, all remaining page references in this chapter refer to Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition."

Thus, "it would take a supreme arrogance" (72) to dismiss the diverse articulations of the "the good, the holy, [and] the admirable" as empty (71). To not approach cultures with a presumption of equality is therefore a moral failing, the failing of arrogance "or some analogous failing" (72). Our recognition of our limited part in the whole human story should be sufficient to accept the presumption of equality, and that "we are very far away from that ultimate horizon from which the relative worth of different cultures might be evident" (73).

Suffice it to say, Taylor's closing formulation in his famous essay underlines the difficulty: is there a "whole human story," an "ultimate horizon," or does this not assume an end of history capable of harmonizing diverse cultures, and the later providence of a theoretical standpoint capable of reconciling what we currently find to be irreconcilable?[7] This tension between Taylor's lofty moral demands and aspirations and the reality of political life which he gently passes over is perhaps best explained by Taylor's two-fold concern: first, to recognize the real force of the moral aspirations which animate Western modernity; and, second, to open space for practice to be the site of negotiation for cultural conflicts which cannot be resolved through theory alone. Clarity about the moral impetus behind the politics of recognition is required, even when its more radical claims are demonstrably confused, because we are in danger of losing sight of the visions of the good that animate the West. At the same time, a certain distance is required in theorizing about political practice, because political practice is the locus of increased contact between, and increased accommodation of, diverse cultures in the modern world, a process that is potentially damaged by the theoretical tensions that theory often

[7] Two critiques of Taylor's reification of present day cultures that address this concern more fully are Appiah, "Identity, Authenticity, Survival" and Orwin, "Charles Taylor's Pedagogy of Recognition."

elucidates. Taylor is thus careful, in his closing comments, to emphasize our great distance from any "ultimate horizon," and that our apparent closeness to any such horizon is an illusion which holds both "multiculturalists" and the opponents of multiculturalism in its grip (73). This illusion, Taylor might add, is nurtured by the hold of acultural theories, and "subtraction stories," which attempt to dispense with, or diminish the importance of, the limitations of our cultural horizons.

Two inter-related questions are largely left unresolved by Taylor's critique of acultural theories of modernity, however. First, Taylor's culturalist interpretation of modernity denies that the modernization of cultures will inevitably lead to a largely homogenous global culture, where the differences in language and customs will no longer constitute substantially diverse peoples or cultures with distinct aspirations and visions of human flourishing. Yet, Taylor's argument seems to grossly underestimate the historical power of the modern moral order and the homogenization of values it has already engendered. Taylor, of course, is not blind to the homogenizing effects of the modern moral order, yet his occasional mentions of such effects are overshadowed by his confidence that diversity in cultural life will always obtain. What is the source of this hope that the homogenization which has already occurred will not, as the modern liberal order advances, produce a largely uniform culture across all corners of the globe? The second crucial question concerns the grounds of Taylor's optimism regarding a future horizon in which we will be capable of evaluating and recognizing the merits of contemporary and historical cultures. Taylor's optimism seems to rest upon an act of faith which is difficult to share or justify on secular grounds. Does Taylor's attempt to provide deep and meaningful recognition of the virtues of diverse cultures and religions

through a cultural account of modernity require a perspective which transcends our narrow and all-too-human perspectives, or might the diversity of human experience be explainable in strictly immanent terms?

As if to respond to these twin questions, Taylor has attempted to demonstrate how Western secularization has not been a source of homogenization but, instead, the great source of human diversity in the contemporary age. Evaluating Taylor's largely novel attempt to provide a cultural account of moral realism (Chapter 4), as well as an account of secularization as the precondition of significant diversity (Chapter 5), thus provides crucial insight into the challenges still facing liberal multiculturalism in the contemporary age.

Chapter 4

The Place of Moral Realism in a Catholic Modernity

Can one escape the insistence among liberals that liberal multiculturalism must rest upon a shared standard of the right? Unlike the strongly liberal conception of liberal multiculturalism advocated by Trudeau and Kymlicka, which seems to assume such standards of right, the communitarian defenses of cultural and religious diversity rest upon a claim regarding the relativity of the right in relation to the good. However, this claim is often in danger of lapsing into cultural relativism in the concrete. For instance, in Sandel's communitarian portrait of the self, it is often difficult to see which communal conceptions of the good should be advocated and which might be perverse or corrupt. As noted (Chapter 2), this ambiguity extends to Sandel's portrait of religious life. Sandel appears to give little guidance for adjudicating between religiously infused debates other than the call to reflection and deliberation. It is for this reason that Taylor's work on modernity and religion is particularly crucial. Taylor, unlike most theorists associated with the liberal multicultural debates, attempts to provide a moral realist defense of cultural diversity. Moreover, Taylor has recognized that liberal multiculturalism raises vexing questions regarding the relation between philosophy and religious faith. For this reason, a sustained discussion of Taylor's attempt to affirm difference on realist grounds, and his portrait of the relation between philosophy and religion, provides unique insight into the problem religious diversity poses for liberal multiculturalism.

Philosophy and Religion

During his acceptance speech for The Marianist Award, Taylor opened his speech titled "A Catholic Modernity?" with the claim that the issues surrounding Catholicism and modernity are **"**issues that have been at the center of [his] concern for decades" (*A Catholic Modernity?* 13). Taylor explained that while these issues "have been reflected in [his] philosophical work," they are fundamentally different from philosophical discourse (*A Catholic Modernity?* 13). According to Taylor, it is "the nature of philosophical discourse…to try to persuade honest thinkers of any and all metaphysical or theological commitments**" (***A Catholic Modernity?* 13). Taylor's distinction reveals a puzzle that is evident throughout his *corpus*: if the issues surrounding Catholicism and modernity have been at the center of his work, how is his work also an attempt "to try to persuade honest thinkers of any and all metaphysical or theological commitments"? Does philosophy, as Taylor understands it, lead to shared metaphysical and theological beliefs, or is it able to bracket differences in metaphysical and theological commitments which somehow remain relevant to its subject matter?

This puzzle is also evident in Taylor's culturalist account of modernity. Taylor appears to argue for the permanence of cultural differences which are capable of limiting our intellectual horizons, and, at the same time, the possibility of intercultural communication which can transcend such limitations through a "fusion of horizons." What is left largely unexplained by Taylor is why this "fusion of horizons," and the rational conversations which are a part of such fusions, will not lead to a homogenous and universal modern culture, and the erasing of differences in our metaphysical and

theological commitments. Perhaps Taylor's most perplexing synthesis in this context is his wedding of moral realism with an argument for the cultural and historical construction of human goods. At first glance, Taylor's culturalist account of modernity, which views cultures as the locus of distinct human goods and aspirations, appears to be identical with the view that morality is constructed and relative to time and place. Thus, Taylor's affirmation of the distinctness of cultures and their aspirations seems to deny the universal reality and validity of particular aspirations. Taylor's realist amendment to this culturalist argument—that cultures can be objectively superior in a certain respect, as complementary parts of a greater human whole—does not resolve the difficulty. Rather, Taylor's realist amendment only prompts a more fundamental question: are there certain respects in which it is more important for a culture to be excellent than others? For if there is no hierarchical ordering of cultural virtues or aspirations, intercultural communication would not provide guidance regarding the relative worth of particular cultures' aspirations; intercultural communication would simply affirm various cultural aspirations as authentic aspirations which are equal in worth. Accordingly, Taylor's culturalist position appears to be incompatible with the claim that moral goods are as real as objects in the natural world. In fact, Taylor explicitly argues against the claim that morality is independent of the particular opinions of political societies. This argument is what allows Taylor to argue for a particularly strong form of human diversity, suggesting that the "other" should appear strange and mysterious rather than readily recognizable and easily accommodated in our systems of liberal multiculturalism.

In sum, the question that is raised by Taylor's analysis is how his culturalist position is a form of moral realism. In its most pointed form, this question can be framed

in terms of Taylor's own theological commitments: if modern Catholicism makes a correct claim regarding moral reality, would not the Catholic faith, and particularly its modern expression, be the one true faith? Taylor does not present such an argument for the demonstrable correctness of the Catholic faith, nor does he seem to think one should present such arguments. Instead, Taylor's relatively rare comments regarding his own Catholicism are voiced, at least in the first instance, to a community of like-minded believers. What, then, does Taylor mean to suggest by his distinction between philosophy and his more personal metaphysical and religious beliefs, and why does he attempt to keep the two relatively separate in practice?

There is a danger of over-simplifying the problem by arguing that Taylor is drawing a common sense distinction between philosophy as a technical profession, the subject matter of which is inherently universalizable, and our metaphysical and theological commitments, the subject matter of which is inevitably more particular and beyond rational discussion. Such a simplification runs counter to Taylor's intellectual project. As we have seen, Taylor has attempted to expand, rather than constrict, the meaning of philosophy and the bounds of rational conversation, arguing that much of contemporary philosophy has presented an impoverished view of moral life by overlooking the reality of cultural difference and intercultural communication, and the rational expansion of moral horizons such communication allows. Similarly, Taylor has suggested that the philosophical aim of articulation "has a moral point, not just in correcting what may be wrong views but also in making the force of an ideal that people are already living by more palpable, more vivid for them" (*The Ethics of Authenticity* 22). As Taylor frequently makes clear, this philosophical articulation and retrieval of moral

ideals extends to matters of metaphysical and theological significance, thereby encompassing metaphysical and theological ideals within the realm of rational conversation.

In what follows, I will argue that Taylor's distinction between philosophy and personal religious or metaphysical commitments can only be understood through an interpretation of his culturalist moral realism which stresses the universal reality of moral goods. On this reading, a fusion of horizons necessarily provides a hierarchical ordering of moral aspirations, even if any contemporary account of human morality must acknowledge the possibility of future changes in this hierarchical ordering. I begin by discussing the relation between Taylor's Catholic faith and his broader philosophical agenda as it is raised in *Sources of the Self* and "A Catholic Modernity," works which articulate the philosophical grounds of Taylor's moral realism, and attempt to differentiate these grounds from the grounds of Taylor's personal theological commitments. In particular, I show how Taylor's critique of disengagement and naturalism makes possible a culturalist moral realism, and how this critique attempts to make space for individual and cultural difference through an account of human life as fundamentally dialogical. I then proceed to explicate the basic contours of Taylor's culturalist moral realism, arguing that Taylor views moral goods as valid across cultures and times. In spite of Taylor's account of the inability of either philosophy or theology to resolve the contemporary debates concerning the meaning of the transcendent, I conclude this chapter by arguing that Taylor's hope regarding a fusion of horizons requires an interpretation of modernity that directly confronts such metaphysical questions. As we shall see (Chapter 5), Taylor's theism, which remains obscure in his early work, turns out

to be essential for understanding his depiction of the contemporary state of belief and unbelief in *A Secular Age*, and, despite his protestations to the contrary, the logical culmination of his culturalist moral realism.

Meeting the Demands of Modernity: The Question of the Transcendent

The issue of religion and modernity is a central concern of Taylor's work. Most notably, the relevance of religion, as a philosophical problem, follows from Taylor's portrait of the relation between theory and practice. This relation is most fully articulated in Taylor's *Sources of the Self* (1989), which is relatively unique among Taylor's works insofar as it is a comprehensive account of Western modernity, aimed at both popular and academic audiences; the scope of his subject matter and breadth of his audience is not duplicated until *A Secular Age* (2007). Not incidentally, it is in *Sources* that Taylor's theological reservations regarding exclusive humanism receive their first full articulation.

Taylor begins by suggesting that philosophy, properly understood, aims at the moral ontology which is capable of articulating our moral and spiritual intuitions and moral responses. Taylor's moral realism starts from a phenomenological claim: our experience of our moral responses, as right responses, makes a claim to reality as valid as scientific claims which claim to correspond to the natural world. Morality is an aspect of reality that is dependent upon human experience and cannot be understood without reference to human subjects, but it is not for this reason less real than phenomena which exist independently of human beings. Second, Taylor advances a transcendental argument regarding our moral responses. Taylor's project is to begin to articulate the

moral ontology which makes sense of our moral conceptions and responses, rather than to assume our immediate moral conceptions and responses are correct:

> What is the picture of our spiritual nature and predicament which makes sense of our responses? 'Making sense' here means articulating what makes these responses appropriate: identifying what makes something a fit object for them and correlatively formulating more fully the nature of the response as well as spelling out what all this presupposes about ourselves and our situation in the world. What is articulated here is the background we assume and draw on in any claim to rightness, part of which we are forced to spell out when we have to defend our responses as the right ones. (*Sources* 8 - 9)

Thus, according to Taylor, moral conceptions are articulations of a more basic moral experience and "know how", and attempt only to capture the reality of this practical experience. Finally, Taylor claims that while articulations of moral reality are governed by our implicit grasp of evaluative distinctions, our articulations of moral reality can have an effect upon our implicit or background understanding. Since implicit experience is not without error, moral theory can sometimes correct mistakes in our implicit understandings. The consequence is that Taylor envisions a dialectic between our implicit and explicit moral views, thereby making certain forms of moral progress possible. This power of articulation in part explains Taylor's own theoretical project: because narrow theories of the moral can block access to our moral intuitions, a reengagement with our moral intuitions and a retrieval of our moral sources can reawaken certain moral experiences.[1]

The role of articulation in Taylor's moral realism returns us to the significance of religion in Taylor's account. According to Taylor, our moral intuitions rest upon an historical "background picture" that cannot be disentangled from our religious past. Rather, Taylor argues, the modern world has been constituted by our religious past,

[1] For an excellent analysis of Taylor's "culturalist moral realism," which informs the present account, see Laitinen 115-131.

including our occasional failed attempts to overcome or forget this past. Accordingly, philosophy, as an articulation of our moral ontology, must confront the significance of religion in defining who we are. Taylor's emphasis upon the theological arguments made in favor of modernity, arguments embedded in our contemporary moral ontology, thus raises the possibility that the modern world cannot be sustained without the theological sources and belief in the transcendent that have shaped it; in attempting to extricate these theological aspects of our moral ontology, we face the risk of losing their moral power. In fact, according to Taylor, we face a moral and spiritual crisis that arises from the diminishing power of the religious bulwarks of our moral lives. Hence, by the end of *Sources*, Taylor can ask "whether we are not living beyond our moral means in continuing allegiance to our standards of justice and benevolence" (*Sources* 517). Absent strong moral sources, such as Christian *agape*, our high standards of justice and benevolence can be perverted by hypocrisy, self-condemnation, pity, and outward projections of our sense of unworthiness in the face of overly high standards.

One of the potential challenges to Taylor's historical account is that the sources of modernity are less theological than surface readings might suggest. Since thinkers have been known to dissemble, particularly as regards religious orthodoxies, is it correct to assert that the moral sources of modernity are primarily theological sources? According to Taylor, focusing upon esoteric secular readings of past thinkers or actors ignores the persuasiveness of past doctrines. For instance, in the 18th century,

> There was, of course, lots of dissimulation….It wasn't easy to declare yourself an unbeliever, and very few did. The costs could be very high. But it is very wrong to see all those we can classify as Deists as either dissemblers or only half-committed to their views. And this mistake is crippling, if we want to understand this period; it obscures our picture of religious and irreligious alike. Or so I want to claim. That is because it hides from us the force of these Deist views as

> religious beliefs. But unless we see what they had going for them, how they could convince and even inspire those who held them, we will miss something crucial in the whole context in which they rose and fell. (*Sources* 266)

As moderns living in a secular age, Taylor claims, we are often tempted to interpret theological arguments for modernity as covertly secular arguments. For instance, the Deist argument that God has made the world for human beings, and it is God's plan that the pious should flourish in this world, is interpreted as rhetorical cover for exclusive humanists writing in an era of religious persecution. The true belief masquerading behind Deism, we assume, is that human flourishing is the unequivocal goal.

Taylor's response to this interpretive tendency is to argue that a focus on esotericism, to the exclusion of the persuasive force of historical arguments, misses something compelling about the contexts in which ideas are articulated, and the significance of such contexts. Most fundamentally, Taylor's argument rests upon his rejection of "idealism," taken here to the mean the doctrine that ideas can be causal forces independent of historical context. Taylor's assertion is that thinkers are relevant only insofar as they articulate ideas in some sense embodied in practice; since ideas must be capable of convincing and inspiring one's audience, the esoteric beliefs of secular thinkers are in a crucial sense secondary to the power of thinkers' explicit teachings, and the reality of the historical context in which these ideas had influence. Taylor thus admits the possibility and even reality of esotericism, but argues for an account of the relation between theory and practice which renders it largely insignificant.[2]

---

[2] For a "post-historicist" response to this basic position, see Melzer. As Melzer notes, the importance of esotericism, as a potential response to the historicist position, is that it presents a conception of theory and practice that does not measure philosophy by the standard of political practice; the pivotal dispute between historicism and esotericism is the harmony or disharmony between theory and practice ("Esotericism and the Critique of Historicism" 288).

Consequently, Taylor's arguments for recognizing the essential role of the transcendent in constituting modernity addresses the challenge of esoteric readings through an historicist interpretation of the relation between theory and practice. However, while Taylor's arguments regarding the importance of the transcendent for understanding modernity are suggestive, his tentative manner of speaking about his own theological commitments raises more questions than answers. For instance, when speaking of his own faith in *Sources*, Taylor consistently refrains from arguing for the rightness of Christianity as the one true faith, instead describing his religious faith as resting upon "hunches" which may or may not be shared by his readers, and by claiming that his silences arise "partly out of delicacy, but largely out of lack of arguments" (*Sources* 517). Is Taylor merely attempting to show the relevance of religion, as one of a plurality of moral sources—alongside, in particular, reason and nature—which have constituted the modern identity, without making a definitive claim regarding the truth or power of any one source? Alternatively, does Taylor ultimately, if delicately, attempt to reveal the reality of God at work in the modern world?

Both readings can be, and have been, plausibly offered as the definitive Taylor. Whereas the first reading stresses an attempted stance of openness to theological and secular alternatives, at the apparent expense of attempting to answer a question of obvious seriousness and urgency, the latter reading sees Taylor's interpretation of this diversity of moral sources as necessarily leading to vindication of a religious outlook which affirms the transcendent, at the apparent expense of openness to modern alternatives to transcendent religion.[3] Taylor has most often been criticized for the latter

[3] For a defense of the first reading, see Morgan. This reading is also arguably shared by Ruth Abbey, in the definitive introduction to Taylor's work, *Charles Taylor*. Criticisms of Taylor's theism or his particular

claim. Many commentators have argued that Taylor, beneath the complicated veneer, is advancing the case for a specific Christian position, and is in some sense blind to the historical and theoretical failings of Christianity. No less a figure than Taylor's teacher, Isaiah Berlin, has described Taylor's work as a teleological Christian project in the Hegelian mold, to which Berlin objects because of the inevitability of conflicting values ("Introduction" 3). Hence, Taylor's admission in "A Catholic Modernity," that Catholicism is at the center of his thought, seems to be grist for the mill for those commentators who have critiqued Taylor, and particularly *Sources of the Self*, for its advocacy of a particular theological position.

As we shall see, there is merit to reading Taylor as advancing an argument regarding the superiority of Christianity to exclusive humanism. However, the problem with this argument, at least as a starting hypothesis or as a comprehensive interpretation, is that it must ignore Taylor's above distinction between his theological commitments and his philosophical work. Such critiques simply dismiss Taylor's reticence in speaking about the correctness of his theological beliefs in philosophical arguments. Since Taylor's explicit intent is to persuade readers of a host of moral and theological commitments, those claiming that Taylor is advancing a straightforwardly theological argument must treat Taylor's distinction as either confused or disingenuous. Yet, rather than show how Taylor is confused or deceptive on such matters, most commentators critical of Taylor's theological commitments have simply assumed, without much argument, that secular interpretations of the rise of modernity are not beset by similar challenges or tensions as theistic accounts, and thereby open themselves to the very

---

approach to theism have tended to dominate the many reviews of *Sources*. For instance, see Glover; Larmore; Shklar; and Skinner, "Who are 'we'?"

criticism of dogmatism which they level against Taylor. Consequently, such critiques must pass over Taylor's numerous claims that doubt, rather than certainty, is our predicament in the modern age. In fact, Taylor has defined our contemporary secular age not as demonstrable evidence for the Catholic religion, but "one in which faith, even for the staunchest believer, is one human possibility among others" (*A Secular Age* 3). In order to see both the strengths and subtle dogmatism that is often operative in critiques of Taylor from a secular perspective, it is useful to consider Quentin Skinner's critique of Taylor's historical project.

History and Moral Realism

Skinner's critique of Taylor is primarily a critique of Taylor's account of the march to modernity and its significance for the contemporary age. Taylor argues that we cannot help but see multiple facets of modernity as an epistemic and moral gain: we value the welfare of others and the avoidance of suffering; we respect individual rights; we affirm ordinary life or the virtues of production and reproduction; and we believe ourselves to be the sources and creators of our values. The implication of Taylor's culturalist interpretation of modernity, Skinner rightly notes, is that we cannot help but be, in some measure, moral realists about our own culture; while Taylor believes we should refine and moderate our aspirations through a critical examination of our history and our current ideals, such a project necessarily takes place within the confines of our own cultural and historical horizons. That is, we all start from the position that our own culture and its goods are, at least in some sense, actually good.

Controversially, then, Taylor suggests that recovering from our loss of spirituality should principally occur through a reengagement with our own cultural traditions, rather than through contact with other cultures.[4] Moreover, Taylor suggests that such a reengagement, without a continued belief in the transcendent, will not be adequate to meet the modern moral challenge. According to Skinner's reconstruction of Taylor's argument,

> Taylor's hunch is that the 'significance of human life' needs to be explained and vindicated in theistic terms, not in our present 'non-theistic, non-cosmic, purely immanent-human fashion'. If we remain 'closed to any theistic perspective' we shall condemn ourselves to our present narrow subjectivism. This is why 'the potential of a certain theistic perspective is incomparably greater' than any purely secularized vision of the moral life. The fullest 'affirmation of humans' requires a belief in God. ("Modernity and Disenchantment" 46)[5]

Hence, on Skinner's reading of Taylor, understanding our contemporary spiritual loss does not simply lead to questioning the persuasiveness of secular humanism, it also leads to a positive affirmation of God.

Skinner's critique of Taylor overarching narrative rests upon an argument concerning the purposes and effects of history, and a corresponding belief in the dangers of religious life. Taylor argues that history reawakens the power of our moral sources, and provides a better account of our present ideals than ahistorical accounts. In contrast, Skinner argues that historical analyses weaken our particular moral attachments. For

---

[4] Skinner's characterization, while largely accurate, passes over Taylor's numerous appeals to understanding foreign others. See especially "Comparison, History, Truth" and "Understanding and Ethnocentricity."

[5] Taylor qtd. in Skinner, "Comments and Replies" 240-241. Skinner claims that the above passage corrects his exaggerated emphasis upon Taylor's arguments for theism in the aforementioned review, "Who are 'we'?" However, Skinner's frustration at Taylor's unwillingness to provide rational arguments for his theistic "hunch," coupled with Skinner's claim that "it is hard for an historian to avoid reflecting that one of the most important elements in the so-called Enlightenment project was to disabuse us of the intuition, experienced by Taylor, "that we need to believe in God if we are to appreciate the full significance of human life" ("Modernity and Disenchantment" 47), suggests that Skinner rests more upon Taylor's speculations than the evidence supports. What Skinner fails to concede is that intuitions experienced by theists such as Taylor are relevant evidence in assessing the success of the "so-called Enlightenment project" in disabusing human beings of religious intuitions.

instance, Skinner notes that the modern affirmation of ordinary life, which for Taylor is a crucial moral source of modernity we cannot authentically deny, requires challenging the moral portrait which sees true fulfillment as the abandonment of everyday life and work; with the modern affirmation of ordinary life, the renaissance conception of the citizen as someone who partakes of government and is devoted to the common good, as opposed to being a bearer of individual rights, is no longer viable. Since the loss of the renaissance ideal is not justified by our present moral ideals, Skinner asserts history is as destructive of our ideals as it is constitutive of them: "we need to recognize, in short, that the march of modernity left a number of casualties lying on the roadside of history" ("Modernity and Disenchantment" 43).

According to Skinner, historians can simultaneously affirm that the positive ethic of family life and work answered to authentic and important aspirations, and that historical analysis provides disturbing awareness "of the sheer contingency of the process by which our values were formed" ("Modernity and Disenchantment" 44). To focus on the "authentic" part of ourselves, to which the ethic of work and family was directed, is to ignore the arbitrary destructions that also take place in history. That such destructions are not, in the final analysis, vindicated, is proven by the judgment our ancestors would cast upon modernity. Our ancestors would not view history as a moral progression, from their epoch to ours. Our view of the world, Skinner argues, is only the one that happened to emerge victorious. In sum, the insight gained through history is not awareness of our genuine moral sources, but awareness of the contingency of our particular moral attachments: "One effect of learning more about the causal story is to loosen the hold of our inherited values upon our emotional allegiances. Haunted by a sense of lost

possibilities, historians are almost inevitably Laodicean in their attachment to the values of the present time" ("Modernity and Disenchantment" 45). This weakening of emotional allegiances is the ideal which is at the core of Skinner's critique. For Skinner, the study of history liberates us from the false belief that our aspirations accord with moral reality. The study of history erodes the politically dangerous illusions of moral realism which gripped earlier ages.

Skinner's account of the liberating effects of history is paradigmatic of what Taylor calls a "subtraction story" of religious decline. Subtraction stories, again, are interpretations of modernity, and secularity in particular, which explain the contemporary age by human beings having liberated themselves from earlier confining horizons or illusions (*A Secular Age* 22). In Skinner's case, the illusion from which we are liberated is our belief that our moral and emotional attachments are right or correspond to an independent moral reality. It is only this belief in the ability of history to strip away illusions that allows Skinner to reconstruct the probable judgment of past epochs upon the contemporary age. Skinner, as historian, transcends the limits of our own cultural horizons to see the irresolvable objections which would be raised by historical cultures against our own epoch. Finally, and crucially, Skinner views historical awareness and the secularization it engenders as a clear epistemic gain. In particular, the intolerance which stems from morally and emotionally committed faiths such as the Christian creed is to be contrasted to the tolerance engendered by the study of history. Skinner thus concludes that without a response to the Christian record of intolerance, and without a response to the philosophical criticisms leveled at Christianity in recent centuries, Taylor and theists like him are merely "whistling in the dark" ("Modernity and Disenchantment" 48).

A common thread in the secular criticisms leveled at Taylor's theological speculations, powerfully articulated by Skinner, is the charge that Taylor assumes the goodness of a theological response to a modern crisis, yet cannot provide a persuasive account of the rightness of the theological position. In short, Taylor is criticized for religious dogmatism, when the intellectual history of recent centuries, and the destructiveness of Western religion, has, at the very least, placed any religious argument on the defensive.[6] However, what is striking is the difference in approach to the question of the place of the theological in the modern world that separates Taylor and critics such as Skinner. Skinner largely begins from the assumption that the absence of universally shared accounts is telling evidence of the rightness of the secular position, or that unbelief is the default position. For Skinner, the challenges and political excesses which have plagued Christianity and other religious traditions are sufficient to call these traditions into question. The difficulty with Skinner's position is that this exacting standard is not applied to secularism, and the political excesses which have been carried out in its name. How, for instance, would Skinner explain or justify the programs of religious repression carried out by the Soviet Union or Communist China? In contrast, Taylor, by attempting to trace the visions of the good which underlie each account, secular and religious, proceeds as if the absence of a universally shared account does not tell one way or the other regarding the rightness or wrongness of the theological position.

This dispute between Skinner and Taylor on the proper standards for evaluating theism returns us to the connection between the question of the theological in the modern age and liberal multiculturalism. Taylor's approach to the division in the West, between those who believe in the transcendent and those who deny its existence, is the same as his

[6]On this point, see Shklar 105-109.

approach to the problem of intercultural communication. As noted previously, Taylor is unique among theorists associated with liberal multiculturalism insofar as he attempts to provide an account of how intercultural communication is possible. This uniqueness stems, in part, from Taylor's assertion that cultural goods are not always easily translatable from one culture to another, and that coming to know the goods of foreign cultures, while difficult, is required by the modern politics of recognition. Taylor's portrait of the moral goods which sustain us, and his attempt to take each party on its own terms, extends this basic problem to the dispute between belief and unbelief in the contemporary world. In both cases, Taylor's starting point is an attempt to engage opinions regarding the good, and the claims being made by cultural, religious, and areligious groups, with the assumption that such engagement may lead to moral progress.

As we shall see in the subsequent chapter, the background assumption of Taylor's argument is that the dispute between belief and unbelief in the West is akin to cultural disputes insofar as it rests upon rival ways of coming to grips with certain tensions or dilemmas that are present in human life. Both believers and unbelievers, Taylor argues, are primarily sustained in their affirmation or rejection of God not by abstract epistemic questions—which cannot settle the question of God's existence—but by visions of the good and human flourishing. For Taylor, coming to know these two alternatives of belief and unbelief, as rival alternatives, involves coming to know the manifold traditions and self-understandings of belief and unbelief. Consequently, liberal multiculturalism cannot ignore or avoid the fundamental dispute between belief and unbelief, but is in many ways an attempt to come to grips with this dispute. At its best, Taylor implies, liberal multiculturalism can increase contact between a range of diverse cultural and religious

traditions, a project that is most seriously undermined when the full scope of modern diversity is ignored or suppressed. Only such an engagement of diverse visions of the good, Taylor intimates, can genuinely confront the dangers of dogmatism with which Skinner is concerned.

"A Catholic Modernity?"

As we saw in the last chapter, Taylor's lofty moral ideal of expanding horizons through intercultural communication is moderated by his argument that one must proceed, in any philosophical conversation, from one's home understanding. On Taylor's own terms, then, his religious "home understanding" should not be wholly ignored. Is there a way in which Taylor's ostensible openness to diverse moral sources reflects a theological commitment that does not reduce Taylor's position to dogmatism? Demonstrating that modern Catholicism actually demands an open minded engagement with the diversity of human alternatives is arguably the animating concern of "A Catholic Modernity." Accordingly, it is in "A Catholic Modernity" that we receive a response to Skinner's critique. To see how Taylor's theologically concerned position may actually prompt a positive engagement with religious and secular alternatives, one may note two crucial facets of the concept of a "Catholic modernity": first, Taylor's account of what it means to be made in the image of God; and, second, his claim that Christianity has itself gained by the rise of exclusive humanism.

Suffice it to say, any interpretation of human beings as *imago Dei* concerns the proper interpretation of a specifically Judeo-Christian tradition. However, Taylor's

interpretation of these religious traditions is not straightforwardly narrow or exclusive. According to Taylor, the meaning of our being made in the image of God is that we are unified as human beings through complementarity and difference, rather than through identity and sameness. Human unity across difference, which is to say a kind of human unity that recognizes human lives are plural, different, and irreducible to one another, captures the ideal of the unified life of God as Trinitarian. This aspect of human beings as *imago Dei*, Taylor claims, has been historically neglected. Specifically, Catholics have been tempted to forget about diversity and have attempted to achieve universality through sameness. As a result, it is tempting to see "modern Catholicism" as an improvement upon previous forms of religious life, as if "modern Catholic" life is complete in a way previous forms of Christian life were not. For instance, one might assume that modern Catholics, insofar as they are able to appreciate the principle that there can be "no widening of the faith without an increase in the variety of devotions and spiritualities and liturgical forms and responses to Incarnation" (*A Catholic Modernity?* 15), are better Catholics than Christians of previous epochs. However, to view "modern Catholicism" as "improved Catholicism" is to misunderstand the significance of complementarity in Taylor's account. According to Taylor, "the point is, taking our modern civilization for another of those great cultural forms that have come and gone in human history, to see what it means to be a Christian here, to find our authentic voice in the eventual Catholic chorus" (*A Catholic Modernity?* 15). Therefore, Taylor's "Catholic modernity" appears to be a modernity among other viable modernities. "Modern Catholicism" is not a point to which we are all converging, but is only one part in an eventual chorus. Such a chorus, Taylor implies, cannot be reduced to any single

cultural or even religious form. Taylor thus advances a Catholic argument for openness to a variety of forms of human flourishing.

Taylor's mention of the Trinity as an example of why Catholics should be more open to difference and complementarity than they currently are underlines the philosophical difficulties that are raised by Taylor's account. The Trinity is a mysterious doctrine insofar as it seems to defy the law of non-contradiction, making what is many one and what is one many. Can we conceive of a God that is both many and one, or must such an argument inevitably defer to the mysteriousness of God and the experience of God's unity across difference? This mystery carries over to Taylor's account of human beings as unified through difference. According to Taylor's account of the fusion of horizons, we can only be parts of a greater whole, both as individuals which are members of communal wholes and as members of communities which are themselves only parts of the human whole. Thus, human beings appear to be defined by their membership in particular communities, and, at the same time, by their common humanity.[7]

Taylor's apparent embrace of a certain mystery in apprehending human reality, and its essential connection to our being made in the image of a Trinitarian God, can be traced to his argument for the dialogical character of human life, and his corresponding critique of the monological ideal. According to Taylor, the illusion of the possibility of unity through sameness is not a perennial feature of human life. Rather, we, as moderns shaped by the Enlightenment, are disposed to ignore the diversity of human life and the apparent mysteries this diversity should engender. Specifically, modern philosophy, beginning with Descartes, has been dominated by a monological understanding of human beings. Descartes' approach is monological insofar as it provides a portrait of an agent

[7] For an analysis of this basic tension in Taylor's account, see Redhead, *Charles Taylor*, 175-203.

"building up a body of reliable knowledge entirely on his own" (*A Catholic Modernity?* 111). For Descartes and his followers, "certainty is something we can generate for ourselves, by ordering our thoughts correctly—according to clear and distinct connections" ("Overcoming Epistemology" 5). This Cartesian understanding shapes our conception of human and divine reality by claiming that only knowledge achieved through monological recreation can correspond to reality; to rest knowledge upon anything other than monological recreation is to rely upon authority. Therefore, Descartes' monological ideal, which first "comes to grips with the problem of knowledge, and then later proceed[s] to determine what we can legitimately say about other things," shapes what we can say about human beings, the world, and even God: "from Descartes's standpoint, this seems not only a possible way to proceed, but the only defensible way. Because, after all, whatever we say about God or the world represents a knowledge claim. So we first ought to be clear about the nature of knowledge, and about what it is to make a defensible claim" ("Preface to *Philosophical Arguments*" vii). Accordingly, Descartes' method is the meditation, which seeks to rest knowledge upon an unshakeable foundation achieved through radical doubt. Epistemology becomes the means of liberating the individual.

In sum, Descartes and the epistemological tradition he inaugurates promotes a view of freedom and the dignity of participating in this freedom. Three aspects of this ideal are especially crucial, according to Taylor:

> The first is the picture of the subject as ideally disengaged, that is, as free and rational to the extent that he has fully distinguished himself from the natural and social worlds, so that his identity is no longer to be defined in terms of what lies outside him in these worlds. The second, which flows from this, is a punctual view of the self, ideally ready as free and rational to treat these worlds—and even some of the features of his own character—instrumentally, as subject to change

> and recognizing in order the better to secure the welfare of himself and others. The third is the social consequence of the first two: an atomistic construal of society as constituted by, or ultimately to be explained in terms of, individual purposes. ("Overcoming Epistemology" 7)

In this way, Descartes and his Enlightenment successors assert that human beings are essentially identical rather than plural beings, and lay the foundations for modern liberalism. In principle, all human beings are capable of radical doubt, or of liberating themselves from common authority and opinions, and it is the aim of political society to use the natural and social worlds as means to individual self-realization.

According to Taylor, a second crucial monological influence upon contemporary thought arises from Kant and his successors. Kant acknowledges human plurality, and thus an aspect of the dialogical character of human life passed over by Descartes, by insisting that any moral maxim must be universalized. However, Kant's theory is monological insofar as it has no space for genuine human difference. That is, Kant asserts that what is morally relevant is what we share with one another as rational agents. The particular communal attachments with which we might identify are, for Kant, inessential to morality. As we have seen (Chapter 2), this Kantian ideal is exemplified in contemporary theory by Rawls' abstract account of individuals in the original position. Rawls attempts to arrive at voluntarily chosen principles of justice by abstracting from our differentiating particulars. Such particulars are assumed, by Rawls, to be inessential to the principles of justice. Thus, as Sandel notes, the apparent dialogue among the parties to the social contract in the original position is, in fact, an agreement about the principles of justice by individuals made identical through abstraction.

What is essential about human life that is missed by the followers of Descartes and Kant? From Taylor's dialogical understanding of human life, the monological

conception of the moral, in both its Cartesian and Kantian forms, cannot account for our communal lives. The social goods present in familial relationships, friendships, and large scale societies such as churches are dialogical insofar as they cannot be chosen by abstract individuals, but must be experienced and known from within the dialogical communal relationship:

> The crucial feature of these communities is that they live by goods that are discovered or made more fully evident or palpable within the community relationship. You don't really know what marital love is all about from outside this relationship, what friendship is before you've lived it, or as much about the love of God as a novice as you will long after your profession. (*A Catholic Modernity?* 112)

Therefore, thinking of the moral solely in terms of individual assent, the model articulated by Rawls, obscures an important tension in our moral lives: if we think only of individual assent we impede the cultivation of community and the goods it makes available. We begin to think the fulfillment happens individually, in our mind and feelings. As Taylor notes, such conceptions of the good must ignore numerous goods—"from dance to conversation, to love, to friendship, to common self-rule, to the preaching of the Word" (*A Catholic Modernity?* 113)—that can only be experienced as the goods they are if the act is shared by others.

Hence, a dialogical approach to human life suggests that human nature cannot be reduced to what exists in individuals. According to Taylor, human beings exist as complementary parts within greater wholes, and they are therefore constituted by their interrelations. Such a portrait, Taylor argues, begins to escape the monological understanding and come closer to a teaching of the Trinity: "When you get to the point of seeing what is important in human life is what passes between us, then you are coming close to the Trinity. It is not so surprising that the fullness of human life is what passes

between humans, if the fullness of divine life passes between persons, and we are made in God's image" (*A Catholic Modernity?* 114). On this view, the monological ideal of free and like individuals cannot cope with the reality of cultural difference, and this failing has clear theological implications; those under sway of the monological ideal are not only blind to human diversity and communal life, they are also blind to the diversity of divine life. Hence, Taylor's embrace of contemporary philosophical anthropology is intertwined with a theological purpose: by overturning the early modern monological understanding of human beings for a dialogical understanding, Taylor attempts to help prepare the way for our time to re-encounter the mystery of the Trinity (*A Catholic Modernity?* 110).

Taylor, however, refuses to employ Trinitarian theology in his philosophical writings, instead relying upon ostensibly secular arguments for the dialogical character of human life. Taylor's refusal to discuss his theological "hunches" is best explained by the main thesis of "A Catholic Modernity." Taylor's primary aim is to argue "that exclusive humanism has provoked, as it were, a revolt from within" (*A Catholic Modernity?* 25). Why is the immanent counter-revolt significant? It is tempting to reduce Taylor's argument to the claim that the modern revolts against exclusive humanism are evidence in favor of religious belief. Taylor, for instance, makes clear that he believes the long march of modernity has in certain ways advanced Christian aims. The rise of exclusive humanism, Taylor notes, has allowed human rights to be affirmed in an unconditional way, even if the route to universal rights has been humbling for Christians. Moreover, the displacing of Christianity as a publicly endorsed and promoted religion has nurtured genuine religious belief by ensuring that Christian faith is arrived at more freely, and is

not corrupted through the employment of political and coercive power. Taylor's theological commitments are also evident in the essay's language. In speaking of the transcendent in the modern world, Taylor's language is self-consciously not neutral: he speaks of an "eclipse" of the transcendent, suggesting that its apparent demise is temporary; moreover, he speaks of those who believe in the transcendent as "acknowledging" its presence, suggesting the transcendent is a real thing which we either succeed or fail to acknowledge.

In spite of the Christian gains engendered by modernity, Taylor suggests that the immanent counter-revolt has, in fact, led to a three or even four-cornered debate which cannot be resolved, at least at the present moment, in favor of any one position: secular humanists make human life the sole end of human striving; neo-Nietzscheans, or anti-humanists, distinguish between the lowness of ordinary life and enlarged or heroic life, but also deny the transcendent; an unnamed group, presumably including many of the religious orthodox, believe in the transcendent, and that modernity has been a mistake; and, finally, Taylor, and others like him, acknowledge some transcendent good beyond life, and believe modernity has been at least a partial moral and spiritual gain. These four groups are in conflict with one another, and each can plausibly cite evidence for the correctness of its position. For instance, "Neo-Nietzscheans and secular humanists together condemn religion and reject any good beyond life. But neo-Nietzscheans and acknowledgers of transcendence are together in their absence of surprise at the continued disappointments of secular humanism" (*A Catholic Modernity?* 29). Thus, one of the reasons Taylor refrains from appealing to theological arguments in his philosophical writings is that such arguments are not as persuasive as philosophical arguments. One

could, and people do, imagine things otherwise, and in such cases Taylor admits to being devoid of arguments (*Sources* 517). Most notably, both secular humanists and anti-humanists believe in the revolutionary story, which views us as liberated from the illusions of the transcendent. They remain in the post-revolutionary climate, and "for those fully within this climate, transcendence becomes all but invisible" (*A Catholic Modernity?* 30). To those within this revolutionary climate of thought, appeals to the transcendent of the kind experienced and acknowledged by Taylor are empty.

Taylor's presumable aim, then, is to engage the participants in this multi-cornered debate in order to show how the arguments against the transcendent are not as strong as they appear, and to render the transcendent once again visible. By rendering the transcendent visible to exclusive humanists or anti-humanists—and Taylor's claim that modern philosophical anthropology is making way for a modern appreciation of the Trinity is an important example—Taylor implicitly attempts to undermine the revolutionary story. Reawakening our belief in, or vision of, the transcendent is crucial evidence against Enlightenment claims that religion dissipates in the face of the scientific "Enlightenment package." As we shall see in the following chapter, Taylor's attempt to provide a master narrative of secularity aims to replace the revolutionary story with a richer and fuller account of our spiritual histories.

Culturalist Moral Realism

The question remains: Is Taylor's culturalist approach to human diversity, which rests upon an affirmation of human diversity, a genuine form of realism? At base, moral

realists assert that our claims about morality can be objectively true or false, and better or worse. Morality, for moral realists, cannot be reduced to our subjective preferences. As we have seen, Taylor presents a number of arguments that are consonant with moral realism: Taylor argues that the point of intercultural dialogue is to recognize goods of universal human worth; he argues, on phenomenological grounds, that our experience of moral responses as right responses are as real as objects which are independent of human experience; finally, he advances transcendental arguments regarding the necessary character of our moral ontology given our experience of moral responses as right responses. Why, however, is Taylor at such pains to survey the various positions of the four-cornered debate, and to remain open to the possibility of benefiting from other cultures, if objective knowledge about moral reality is possible?

Taylor might reply to such reservations with a counter-question: Why should one assume that morality is real only if it potentially exists independently of our experience of it? According to Taylor, our proclivity to view moral realism as positing a standard of morality that is independent of human experience is a result of the hold of naturalism and the monological ideal upon contemporary thought. Naturalists are forced, by their untenable ideal of knowledge, to claim that morality is something unreal which is projected upon a more fundamental reality. However, the disengaged objectivist stance of naturalism cannot account for human experience as it is actually lived. Accordingly, the disengaged theoretical position cannot possibly be maintained when we are engaged in our social and moral lives. Those under the spell of naturalism are forced to shuttle between a "real" world in which our morality is illusory and projected upon a more fundamental reality and their lives as they are actually experienced in the world.

Taylor's phenomenological argument against this disengaged stance cannot be the final story. A phenomenological approach to moral realism must confront difference in moral experience as an important aspect of human reality, and must come to terms with the fact that the moral experiences of different cultures, at least in some cases, contradict one another. Moreover, as Taylor acknowledges, members of diverse cultures experience their cultures as better than other cultures. Our experience of our moral beliefs as real and superior is thus challenged by the similar experience of other cultures. This multiplicity of values, and the role of culture in shaping our moral beliefs, is often what raises the non-realist counter-assertion that our beliefs about moral reality are illusory or confused, and are subjective projections upon the world. According to this criticism of moral realism, it is true that we experience the world as if moral matters are real, but these are confused beliefs that we should dispense with in the name of honesty and political moderation.

A moral realism which defends an engaged perspective against the objective disengaged stance of natural science must therefore come to grips with human diversity. Traditional moral realism tends to explain human diversity in two ways: [8] by arguing that diversity occurs through particular specifications of abstract and universal goods, and that diversity results from the differing distances of cultures from moral reality. According to Taylor, both accounts of these accounts of diversity of goods are only partially correct. An abstract, but universally valid, account of moral goods is insufficient to explain diversity because the specifications of abstractly valid goods are morally significant. There is no reason to suppose that the "universal," rather than what is specified, should be given more moral weight simply because it is universal. Furthermore, an account of

[8] The following account of Taylor's culturalist moral realism draws from Laitinen 115-131.

cultural diversity which assesses cultures in terms of their distance from morality cannot encompass all forms of cultural diversity. Diverse forms of human flourishing cannot always be viewed as lesser or greater forms of human flourishing. Hence, end of history accounts, which hold forth the promise of overcoming cultural diversity through a comprehensive end state, are bound to fail. Be that as it may, Taylor does argue that there are some cases in which moral "supersession" arguments necessarily run in one direction. For instance, in the Western world, it is inconceivable that arguments for gender equality will be reversed. Today, the 19th century arguments that gender equality is against the natural order of things "are virtually unrecoverable" ("Comment on Habermas" 162). However, since there is no reason to believe that all cultural diversity can be explained through "supersession arguments," there is no reason to believe that history unfolds in progressive stages. Moreover, Taylor claims that the possibility of novel future moral goods cannot be ruled out. Thus, any apparent end of history would necessarily be provisional.

In contrast to traditional forms of moral realism, which explain cultural diversity as either inessential or as a sign of the relative distance of cultures from moral reality, Taylor attempts to affirm cultural diversity as a necessary component of moral realism. Taylor's affirmation of the diversity of moral and cultural goods rests upon two fundamental claims. First, the cultural diversity of goods is due to the diversity of our knowledge of these goods. As individuals embedded within particular cultural horizons, our knowledge of the good is often, albeit not necessarily, restricted to those goods which are present within these limited horizons. In this way, Taylor claims that our socially shared self-understandings, including our various untranslatable languages, will continue

to be the source of diverse expressions of the good, and these shared self-understandings will be transcended only rarely and with difficulty. Second, Taylor argues that we can only experience particular goods at the expense of others. For this reason, diversity will always rule in moral matters, at both the individual and communal or cultural levels; the plurality of goods cannot be lived at one and the same time.

However, Taylor's moral realism is universal in scope insofar as he argues that moral goods do not depend upon any one particular historical community. Goods which are first discovered in one cultural context can, through intercultural dialogue, be shared or experienced by members of diverse cultures. The limits that our own cultural horizons and shared self-understandings place upon our ability to experience goods which originate from outside our culture are therefore not absolute. In short, Taylor argues that moral goods are not wholly independent of human experience insofar as they must remain goods that are potentially realizable as moral goods within actual cultural or historical contexts, and that moral goods are real and universally valid insofar as they transcend their instantiation in any one particular community.

Taylor can cite an important psychological reason why culturalist moral realism is convincing. The tension between the plurality of cultural goods is comparable to the plurality of incommensurable goods we experience in our own lives. In daily life, we recognize that we cannot experience all goods, or know all goods sufficiently, and thus do not make comprehensive determinations of the good by enjoying a specific moral good. For this analogy to hold, however, Taylor's culturalist moral realism must assume that the full range of human goods is at least theoretically harmonious; while we might only know and experience particular goods at the expense of others, Taylor's account

must assume that all genuine human goods will be recognized as such within an ultimate fusion of horizons. Without such knowledge or hoped for knowledge, Taylor is open to the criticism that some shared self-understandings or cultural contexts might occlude certain real moral goods. For instance, might our own modern self-understandings make a recovery of certain ancient virtues impossible in any substantial sense? While it is theoretically possible that all real cultural goods are potentially realized within any culture, it is a mistake to conclude, without additional evidence, that this theoretical possibility is in fact a reality. In fact, Taylor's own demand for concrete demonstrations of the worth of cultures seems to require agnosticism regarding the ultimate limits of intercultural communication.

Taylor's affirmation of diversity, and his hopes regarding the theoretical harmony of moral goods, returns us to his theological and metaphysical commitments. As we have seen, Taylor's account of an eventual "Catholic chorus" provides a Catholic account of why one might hope for such an eventual harmony among cultural goods. Must Taylor's account rest upon a religious foundation? Taylor provides some potentially universal reasons for hope as regards an eventual harmony of diverse cultural goods: we personally know the experience of being aware of a greater number of goods than we can personally enjoy, and we are also relatively confident that certain historical and irreversible movements within the West, such as gains in gender equality, have been a moral advance. Taylor's religious example of intercultural communication, which would allow Christians, Muslims, and Buddhists to express their differences through a common language, yet remain distinct, might thus have a secular counterpart.

However, Taylor's account of the "immanent counter-revolt" and its significance raises serious challenges to secular accounts of modernity. According to Taylor, the exclusive humanist narrative has been too contestable to be a final or comprehensive account of human reality, and it has therefore failed to live up to its original hope of affirming humanity. Significantly, however, Taylor's claim that the question of the meaning of the transcendent remains, in some sense, an open question, does not bear upon the four parties to the multi-cornered debate equally. The narratives of both secular humanists and neo-Nietzscheans explicitly argue against the transcendent as a vital force in the modern world. In contrast, thinkers such as Taylor, who believe in the transcendent as a matter of religious faith, can more easily embrace the possibility of mystery and even doubt of the transcendent in their account. Unlike exclusive humanists, theists such as Taylor can hope for divine providence to reconcile the contemporary tensions between faith and secularity. In sum, Taylor's reading of modernity is more open to the diversity of human flourishing than is sometimes admitted by his critics, yet also seems to lead in the direction of religious faith. Accordingly, turning to Taylor's recent attempt to provide a master narrative of secularity not only helps clarify what is ultimately obscure in his early work, namely Taylor's ultimate stance on the transcendent, it also helps demonstrate the extent to which Taylor's attempt to affirm a robust account of cultural diversity often rests upon theological answers to metaphysical questions.

Chapter 5

Liberal Multiculturalism in a Secular Age

To what extent can liberal multiculturalism claim to accommodate religious diversity? As we have seen in the case of Trudeau and Kymlicka, the most persuasive attempts to address this question and maintain a form of liberal multiculturalism are those which defend modern cultures and religions over and against traditional or archaic cultures and religions. Most fundamentally, modern cultures and religions view culture or religion as the means to self-realization, as opposed to an entity which transcends the individual and can demand their obligation. On this view, religious or cultural groups can only be politically defended or protected insofar as they protect the sanctity of the liberal individual. However, as we began to see in our analysis of Kymlicka, the problem with this reliance upon the moral force of modernity is that it has difficulty addressing challenges that doubt the goodness of modernity itself. From the standpoint of post-modernism, or Taylor's "neo-Nietzscheans," the tendency of liberal multicultural theorists to sideline the significance or legitimacy of religious appeals is evidence of liberal multiculturalism's sometimes shallow attempt to defend liberalism and a homogenous liberal political culture at the expense of robust cultural diversity. From the standpoint of religious traditionalists, or those who would uproot modernity root and branch, the modern demands placed upon religious life are often perversions or denials of genuine religious practices and beliefs, and dissolve or weaken religious devotion to the transcendent. What is shared by both these critiques is the claim that religions and cultures are forced to conform to standards which are presumed to be right independent

of the actual opinions and practices of particular traditions; one can plausibly claim that Trudeau, Kymlicka, and Rawls fail to confront religious belief on its own terms. Without substantial and sympathetic accounts of the persuasiveness of liberal multiculturalism from within such religious traditions, liberal multiculturalism appears to offer little more than platitudes to genuine religious believers.

What, exactly, would an account of the rise of liberal multiculturalism that is sympathetic to religious belief look like? Does a sympathetic account of religious belief and its manifold traditions ultimately lead one beyond the bounds of liberal multiculturalism? As intimated in the previous chapter, the puzzles and potential solutions to this tension within liberal multiculturalism are nowhere more evident than in the thought of Taylor. Taylor's sustained analysis of secularization and its relevance for the contemporary age provides crucial insight into the assumptions often underlying liberal multiculturalism. For this reason, our analysis of the challenges facing multiculturalism finds a fitting conclusion in a discussion of Taylor's magisterial work on secularization, *A Secular Age*.

I argue that the guiding, if sometimes obfuscated, purpose of Taylor's investigation is to renew our appreciation of the transcendent, and the diverse way it inspires accounts of human fullness, i.e., conditions or activities to which we aspire and which are experienced as deeper or richer than ordinary life. Specifically, I argue that a key thread running throughout Taylor's work is the argument that the rise of unbelief has been accompanied by a diversification of spiritual and religious life, a diversification which has made liberal multiculturalism possible. According to Taylor, these diverse spiritualities—or at least those which represent genuine human excellences or forms of

human flourishing—require defense in the modern world. Absent such defenses, Taylor seems to imply, the moral force of the transcendent can be perverted or dimmed. However, I conclude that Taylor's account of the fate of belief and unbelief in the modern world, as being faced with common dilemmas which cannot be solved by reason alone, is not, as he claims, a neutral or open description of belief and unbelief, but a decidedly theological portrait of the bounds of philosophical reflection.[1]

Secularization: Three Conceptions

Two fundamental questions are critical for our purposes: first, how does "secularization" help explain the rise of modernity, in general, and liberal multiculturalism, in particular? Second, how might various conceptions of secularization help explain both the successes and pathologies of modernization, and the theories of liberal multiculturalism discussed in earlier chapters? To answer these questions, it is useful to begin with Taylor's starting point: what is "secularization" and "what does it mean to live in a secular age" (*A Secular Age* 1)?[2] As Taylor notes, this starting point is one which assumes a shared understanding. We, as Westerners, genuinely agree that we live in a secular world, yet we disagree on what, precisely, this means. To articulate these diverse opinions, Taylor distinguishes between three conceptions, or rather families of conceptions, of secularization, all of which help explain our secular age.

[1] For a thoughtful discussion of the reviews of a *A Secular Age*, and Taylor's own responses to these reviews, see Warner, VanAntwerpen, and Calhoun 4-7. As the authors note, there has been a tendency among reviewers to read the text as little more than Catholic apologetics, while offering a superficial or often demonstrably false reading of Taylor's arguments (for instance, see Diggins). One of the unfortunate consequences of such misreadings is they potentially conceal the more fundamental ways in which Taylor's argument can be considered religious in nature.

[2] Unless noted otherwise, all page references in this chapter refer to Taylor, *A Secular Age*.

The first conception is state-centric, and rests upon a demarcation between the public and private sphere: secularization consists in a change in institutions and practices, such as the separation of Church and State. There is, of course, at least partial truth to this conception. State enforced religion, once a staple of political life in the West, is anathema to secular liberal democratic government. A crucial aspect of this difference concerns the justification and meaning of state power and authority: "whereas the political organization of all pre-modern societies was in some way connected to, based on, guaranteed by some faith in, or adherence to God, or some notion of ultimate reality, the modern Western state is free from this connection" (1). The contemporary examples of liberal governments which have an explicit connection to a particular religious denomination—such as England and the Anglican Church—help illustrate Taylor's argument. In such cases, the state religion does not demand the obligation of all citizens.

As Taylor argues, this conception of secularization entails a change in social practices and public spaces. According to the first conception of secularization, public spaces have not been deprived of religion *per se*, but of the authority of any one religion in particular. Religious authorities, such as the clergy, no longer possess authoritative positions in public discourse. The example of the United States helps illustrate this first family of conceptions of secularization. Historically, of course, the United States has been shaped by a relatively clear and strong distinction between Church and State. However, and perhaps precisely because of its older and more rigid constitutional forms, religious belief and practices have flourished in the United States, particularly as compared to Western Europe. According to those who hold to this first conception of secularization, this flourishing of religion is not sufficient to deny American secularism.

On this view, the United States is a profoundly secular society (for better or worse) insofar as it continues to respect the liberal virtues of religious toleration and individual freedom of conscience.

Is it correct to describe the United States, or other highly religious societies with a clear distinction between public and private, as secular? Religious revivalism is a contemporary fact of American political life, and religious groups and arguments continue to play a prominent, if controversial, role in American political discourse. Historically, of course, the vitality of America's religious life has been the basis for claims of American exceptionalism. For this reason, the United States is often seen as one of the least secularized liberal democratic countries in the world. In making such claims, both critics and admirers of the United States are drawing upon Taylor's second family of conceptions of secularization: the belief that secular societies are those which have successfully undertaken the emptying of God or the transcendent from public spaces and public life, such that any remaining references to God are vestigial. This family of conceptions of secularization centers upon the belief or sense that the decline in publicly affirmed religious beliefs is part and parcel of a decline in religious belief more generally; liberated from the illusions of pre-modern religion, and the authority of church structures, modernized societies are inevitably freed from religious influence and beliefs.

Before turning to Taylor's third conception of secularization, one should note the importance of this distinction between secularization as the division between public and private life, and secularization as the decline of religious belief, for our earlier analysis. As we saw (Chapters 1-3), Trudeau, Kymlicka, and Rawls share an essential, if often unarticulated, faith in the capacity of secularization to explain the modern world and the

possibility of liberal multiculturalism. In these cases, the possibility of irreconcilable yet just religious conflict is cast aside in the belief that no religious doctrines or creeds can justify the state enforcement of religion, and that liberalized religions—which is to say those religions which acknowledge the liberal conception of right—constitute the only defensible religiously informed groups or cultures within modern politics. Modern, healthy forms of the major religions are therefore contrasted with the archaic and intolerant past forms out of which these modern religions developed. In claiming that defensible religious are those which respect the liberal distinction between public and private, this conception of religion rests upon a version of "Secularization 1." What remains obscure in these accounts, however, is the extent to which "Secularization 1" can be reconciled with the diversity of religious life. Since Trudeau, Rawls, and Kymlicka largely avoid justifying liberal multiculturalism on the terms of religious believers themselves, the possibility that the liberalization of religions and cultures is parasitical on religious practice and belief, and actually culminates in a decline of religious experience, remains an open possibility.

Hence, these two conceptions of secularization reveal questions which are necessarily intertwined with, but inadequately answered by, the liberal multicultural project. Does the transformation of religion which accompanies liberalization and modernization ultimately deny the very possibility of genuine religious belief? Is the transformation of religion which has occurred in liberalized countries a stage upon the way to the complete decline of religious belief, or is it the expression of alternative spiritualities? Taylor's own approach to secularization and, indirectly, liberal multiculturalism, is directly relevant to these questions. Rather than engage in protracted

discussions of the separation of religion and public life, and the levels of belief or unbelief in societies, Taylor's articulates a conception of secularization which attempts to explore the changing conditions of belief and unbelief. Taylor's conception rests upon the simple yet persuasive point that what we mean by belief or unbelief has itself changed, and thus grasping the changing conditions of belief or unbelief, as opposed to "measuring" levels of belief, will reveal the diversity of belief and unbelief as lived experiences in the modern age. More specifically, Taylor argues that "the shift to secularity in [his third] sense consists, among other things, of a move from a society where belief in God is unchallenged and indeed, unproblematic, to one in which it is understood to be one option among others, and frequently not the easiest to embrace" (3). Although this third form of secularization can be, and usually has been, accompanied by a separation of public institutions and religious life, and a decline in religious faith, neither of these two forms of secularization are strictly necessary for secularization in Taylor's third sense to come into being.

The strength of this third sense of secularization, Taylor asserts, is that it avoids the genuine naïvetés which plague discussions of religion: "either that unbelief is just the falling away of any sense of fullness, or betrayal of it (what theists sometimes are tempted to think of atheists); or that belief is just a set of theories attempting to make sense of experiences which we all have, and whose real nature can be understood purely immanently (what atheists are sometimes tempted to think about theists)" (14). In contrast, Taylor argues that what is required for a secular age to take hold is not simply the falling away of traditional belief, but new and diverse experiences of fullness, which are experienced without reference to religion or the transcendent. Exclusive humanism,

i.e., a humanism which excludes all reference to the transcendent, needs to become a thinkable and livable option for the great mass of human beings.

Might not the shift of our collective attention away from the ostensible decline in religious belief to the conditions of belief and unbelief, and to belief and unbelief as "lived experiences," underestimate the extent to which genuine faith and piety have declined, or been substantially weakened, in the face of modernization? Taylor's shift in focus ultimately rests upon his resistance to "subtraction stories" of religious decline and moral progress. As we shall see, part of Taylor's concern is that the ostensibly rational reasons for the abandonment of faith, such as the belief that "Darwin refutes the Bible," are not in fact sufficient to refute religious faith. Intellectual critiques of faith in the name of science often fail to account for why our diverse historical paths were chosen, and fail to address the theoretical and moral difficulties still plaguing atheistic accounts of the modern moral order. It is for this reason that positive accounts of humanism, in terms of human fullness, are required. Exclusive humanism is not something we simply fall into once science or reason triumphs.

This returns us to the decisive question which was raised in the last chapter: does Taylor present an account which is able to speak to both believers and unbelievers alike? This question is essential if one is to assess Taylor's own characterization of his philosophical project, as one which attempts to be persuasive to a multitude of theological and metaphysical commitments. It is also a critical question for interpreting *A Secular Age*. At first glance, Taylor's defense of his project looks like an open-minded confrontation of the diversity of belief and unbelief in the modern world. Most notably, Taylor's reservations regarding "subtraction stories," and his defense of interpreting

belief and unbelief in terms of fullness, are directed towards believers and unbelievers alike. Almost all of us, Taylor declares, inhabit a world of doubt, where any single position is lived as one option among others. However, to evaluate Taylor's attempt to do justice to belief and unbelief as lived experience, it is necessary to engage Taylor's historical-theoretical account of the rise of the possibility of unbelief. This is because Taylor's work is, at its core, an historical work, which attempts to provide a persuasive master narrative regarding our modern conditions of belief and unbelief.

"Bulwarks of Belief"

Since Taylor's project is to explain why it was "virtually impossible not to believe in God in, say, 1500 in our Western society, while in 2000 many of us find this not only easy, but even inescapable" (25), Taylor begins his analysis with an account of why God once seemed undeniable for us as Westerners. Although Taylor's account of these "bulwarks of belief" is not meant to be exhaustive, particularly insofar as it attempts to avoid a causal explanation,[3] he identifies three conditions which made atheism practically unthinkable for the great mass of people in the pre-modern age. First, the order and events of the pre-modern world could be understood as continual testifications to a divine purpose because of the readily apparent order of the world itself. The order of our ordinary experience thus seemed to indicate God's design. The great natural events were

[3] To some extent, Taylor begs the question as to why these bulwarks of belief were persuasive in the first place. Taylor maintains that the historical self-understandings of the period were such that God was implicated in society and in an enchanted world, yet he gives little evidence—other than the important suggestion that our immediate experience of the world is as an ordered whole—regarding why such self-understandings were themselves persuasive. The ostensible reason for Taylor's begging of this question appears to be Taylor's wish to avoid controversial questions regarding the source of pre-modernity's almost unquestioned faith in God.

not exceptions to this order, but were themselves "acts of God" (25). Second, God was not only implicated in the natural order, but was implicated in society's existence. God was an essential and constitutive feature of polis, church, or kingdom, and society's manifold associations—its guilds, boroughs, and the like—"were interwoven with ritual and worship" (25). In the pre-modern age, then, the kingdom and its associations were conceived of as necessarily grounded upon the transcendent, "in something higher than mere human action in secular time" (25). Third, the pre-modern world was not a morally or spiritually neutral place. Rather, it was an "enchanted" world of spirits, demons, and moral forces. One was continually engaged with spiritual beings in the world. Taken together, these three conditions of belief do not necessitate a belief in the Christian God—as evidenced by pagan spiritual beliefs in the pre-modern age—but they do make atheism or pure unbelief nearly inconceivable for the vast majority of people.

Yet, Taylor argues, the modern age does not simply arise out of the absence of pre-modern conditions of belief, as if we have dispensed with illusions and have uncovered our natural state. To focus solely upon the decline of certain conditions of belief is to ignore the alternative sources of fullness or flourishing which were required for the transformation to the modern age. Taylor's proof of this need for the invention or creation of an alternative to God as the center of our moral and spiritual aspirations is that many still do center their lives upon God in the absence of these pre-modern conditions. The absence of these conditions was thus not sufficient to dispel God.

To see the relevance of Taylor's historical account for liberal multiculturalism, it is worth elaborating upon two key movements from the pre-modern to the modern age: first, Taylor's account of the move from the porous self to the buffered self; and, second,

Taylor's account of the move from a world constituted by hierarchical complementarity to one which seeks to institute complete equality and a uniform and universally applicable code. According to Taylor, the fundamental lived experience of a self in the enchanted world is that of the porous self. This self is defined as porous insofar as it does not experience meaning as something which is restricted to our minds. For the porous self, meanings can reside in things independently of us, and even in our absence. Thus, the porous self is open and vulnerable to spirits, demons, and moral forces. In fact, in an enchanted world, meanings can *impose* themselves upon us. The most remarkable feature of the porous self is that such a self cannot disengage from feelings or emotions, as if such feelings or emotions are simply in our mind. For instance, Taylor notes that in the pre-modern age, one cannot distance oneself from an excess of black bile, i.e., from melancholy, because black bile *is* melancholy (37). To suggest to a porous self that one is melancholic because of black bile is not to distance the self from the emotion, but to affirm that one is in the grips of the real thing.

Suffice it to say, such experiences are radically different from our experience of feelings and emotions. We are what Taylor calls buffered selves, which is to say we are in the hold of the modern mind/body distinction, and thereby distanced from that which lies outside the mind. The example of bile and melancholy is particularly illustrative. To suggest to a buffered self that melancholy is caused by one's body chemistry, or hunger, or a hormone function, is to immediately distance the buffered self from the emotion. The emotion is less real because it is "a contingent cause of the psychic" (37). For the buffered self, identity is no longer constituted by external meanings, but from within. A major part of this transition from the porous to the buffered self is the great change it

requires in how we view the non-human world. In the enchanted world, the non-human world is inhabited by personal and impersonal forces and meanings. Natural events are acts of a host of agents, from demons to saints to God. In contrast, as buffered selves, we inhabit a non-human world of exception-less laws constituted by "principles of order…not related to human meaning, at any rate not immediately or evidently" (60). In such a universe, one simply cannot make sense of meaning existing anywhere but within minds or subjects.

At this point in the analysis, one might be tempted to recast Skinner's critique of Taylor. Taylor's portrait of the porous self seems to be a mixture of romanticized reflections upon pre-modern life—Taylor rarely notes the political dangers that might arise from "enthused" or "possessed" selves—and an illustration of the fantastical and superstitious conceptions of the world which ruled our ancestors. In fact, Taylor himself seems to raise these difficulties. In the course of his historical analysis, Taylor continually emphasizes how foreign this pre-modern outlook is to our modern age, and how this difference should elicit our wonder. At the same time, Taylor consistently emphasizes how we, as moderns, cannot return to such prior ways of lived experience, as we have been thoroughly transformed by the modern moral order. Yet, if we cannot return to the pre-modern age, and modernity has itself been a moral or spiritual gain, what is to be learned from the pre-modern age? Might not our political or moral difficulties lie in our incomplete renunciation of the pre-modern?

Taylor is not without a response. First, Taylor's account of the porous self, while in part meant to elicit wonder and a sense of strangeness, is also compatible with his own calls for a greater appreciation of difference or the other than is often supposed by

atomistic theories. We may have moved beyond the world of demons, spirits, and earthquakes wrought by God, but our historically constructed susceptibility to the mind/body distinction, and the disengaged stance it privileges, has also robbed us of the ability to see the meaning which is present in the diverse human expressions of the good, expressions which can be manifest at the social, rather than the individual or subjective, level. Yet, Taylor's understanding of human nature, as at least in part constituted by the relations between people, requires openness to diverse moral and spiritual expressions, an openness which is akin to the capacity of the porous self to be open to the moral forces in the enchanted world. In the modern age, meaning may be articulated or even discovered through introspection, but, Taylor suggests, it can only be fully realized through dialogue with others. It is in this sense that we must sustain and even recover the benefits of the porous self.

This brings us to Taylor's account of the move away from a world of hierarchical complentarity. According to Taylor, the pre-modern world was governed by interplay between structure and anti-structure, an interplay which embodied the tension between the turning of life beyond human flourishing and the institutions and practices of human flourishing. As an organizing principle for mediaeval Catholic society, this entailed hierarchical complentarity: "the clergy pray for all, the lords defend all, the peasants labour for all" (45). However, this hierarchical complentarity did not rule through a single hierarchical set of rules. Structures or codes were occasionally over-turned or suspended; in festivals of the period, such as Carnival, the usual order of the world is temporarily reversed. According to Taylor, such festivals share a lived sense of complentarity, of the mutual necessity of opposites, which cannot be lived at the same

time. What is most essential about this world, in both its hierarchical organization and its festivals or events, is that the notion of complentarity upon which it draws is one which exists on the moral or spiritual level. Contradictory principles did not simply exist, they were assumed to be an aspect of our moral and spiritual existence.

The relevance of the sediment of hierarchy and the differentiation it affords should be evident. As moderns, Taylor notes, we have a deep commitment to equality, and thus the hierarchical arrangement of clergy, nobility, and peasant strikes us as both foreign and morally repulsive. Although we cannot straightforwardly affirm such hierarchical forms of belonging, Taylor's portrait of complentarity in the pre-modern age, and its ability to embrace a diversity of contradictory principles is, in some measure, meant to be compelling. Accordingly, the dangers of forgetting the necessity of complentarity and the necessity of contradictory principles are at the heart of Taylor's attack on procedural liberalism:

> A principle of opposition can be built into our reigning political code, as with the division of powers….Of course, an attempt may still be made on the intellectual plane to show how these free, self-limiting regimes flow from a single principle, as we see, for instance, with the contemporary 'liberalism' of Rawls and Dworkin….This shows how deeply modernity has invested in the myth of the single, omnicompetent code. (52)

The aim, then, is not a return to the pre-modern age of hierarchical complentarity which is inscribed in the heavens or in nature, but a pluralist form of government which mitigates the excesses of the modern order and recognizes that we often must give allegiance to more than one principle (52). In these pluralist societies, moments of anti-structure can be cultivated within the private sphere, as well as through voluntary public spheres such as in the realms of music, art, and even religious life.

Some readers might be inclined to interpret Taylor's arguments as crucial support for the liberal multiculturalist position. As these last remarks indicate, however, Taylor's arguments are also a critique of any attempt at uniform liberal multicultural models. The obvious extension of Taylor's argument is that one cannot arrive at liberal multicultural models which will do away with the need to limit, or temporarily suspend, the model itself; for Taylor, all structure needs its moments of anti-structure. As Taylor makes clear in his analysis, no single political model can hope to do justice to the competing and exclusive principles to which we are committed. Moreover, Taylor's historical account serves to illustrate the danger of the hold of multiculturalism as a single code which can ignore the need for the evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of cultures, or the need for the practical and often theoretically messy adjudication between diverse cultures. We should recall on this point that Taylor's analysis of the rise of the politics of recognition is essentially intertwined with the collapse of social hierarchies. This collapse does not do away with the need for evaluation of cultures altogether, but simply moves this evaluation to the realm of dialogical negotiation between cultures in and through history. The benefit of pluralist societies, which can encourage the meeting of diverse cultures in moments of anti-structure, is their ability to realize this flourishing and evaluation.

"The Work of Reform"

Thus, Taylor's first major aim is to show how the pre-modern age offers insight into some of the depravities or pathologies of the modern age, and how knowledge of the pre-modern age's predominant outlook can help to mitigate these depravities or

pathologies. The pre-modern age offers insight into human life because modernity is not simply an epistemic gain, divorced from pre-modern illusions, but a particular expression of human life that is constructed in and through history. Taylor's second major aim is provide an account of how we arrived at the modern secular age, an historical account which attempts to demonstrate that modern secularity is a particular, rather than universal, expression of human life. As we shall see, Taylor's account of the rise of the modern age lays the groundwork for the liberal culturalist claim that individualism is itself a particular cultural construction, and not a reality of human nature which is independent of our cultural traditions.

Taylor begins by stressing that the original transformations in early modernity were primarily due to a religious concern. The remarkable irony of our religious past is that the contingent rise of exclusive humanism for masses of people arises from an obsession with religious reform. Taylor identifies this change with the profound dissatisfaction, on both the elite and popular levels, with the aforementioned system of hierarchical complentarity and the elevation of the renunciative vocations upon which this system rested. The response to this dissatisfaction is decisive: for the first time in our history, and perhaps in human history, there is an attempt to refashion the whole of human society. The great Reform movements (roughly 1450 – 1650), which encompass the Reformation and the counter-Reformation, share five essential characteristics: they are activist in their attempts to re-order society; they attempt to impose a single, uniform model on society; they attempt, through collective goals such as general education, to reduce difference; and, finally, they are "rationalizing," in the sense that they increasingly rely upon instrumental reason, and the ordering of society through rules (86).

Theologically, the wish for religious reform moves along three axes: an increased emphasis upon inward personal devotion; an uneasiness regarding Church magic, including the notions of enchantment surrounding charged items such as sacramentals; and, finally, the "new inspiring idea of salvation by faith, which erupted into a world riven with anxiety about judgment and a sense of unworthiness" (76). Although Taylor is agnostic as regards the origins of this "rage for order," he argues that it appears "to be a fact about the late-mediaeval and early modern period, and moreover one which has carried into the modern period in the partly secularized ideal of 'civilization'" (63). Accordingly, Taylor argues, it is this rage for order which was crucial to the destruction of the enchanted cosmos.

The rage for order begins a comprehensive reformation of church structures and secular life. One of the pivotal transformations is what Taylor has called the affirmation of ordinary life.[4] Radical Protestantism provides its starkest form. Radical Protestantism completely rejects the allegedly higher vocations; it renounces human flourishing in this world and "builds renunciation into ordinary life" (81). On this view, human flourishing in ordinary life is not the aim of religious faith, but the consequence of being turned towards God. In this transformation, we are beholden to a three-fold attempt at order: to order our personal lives towards God; to order society, so as to prevent vices from infecting others; and, finally, to build a right inner attitude, by navigating between a lack of faith in the saving power of God, and an excessive confidence in one's salvation. The great reversal is prepared by this three-fold building of order:

> One on hand, we have people who develop the disciplines of character, so that they can put some (for the time) impressive degrees of moral order in their conduct. On the other, some of these people in association find ways to impose

[4] This transformation is primarily discussed in *Sources of the Self* 211 - 302.

> an unprecedented degree of order on society, or at least come to believe that they can do so, given the right conditions. (84)

The decisive change is from the contemplation of an order of God, or of forms in the world, to a nature which should be conquered by human beings, as God created agents of instrumental reason. Our highest calling is no longer contemplation of the cosmos, but to carry out God's plan for human flourishing on earth.

An important aspect of this transformation is the imposition of a new order, coherent and uniform in purpose and principle, which imparts an unprecedented primacy to the individual. Prior to the imposition of this order, there was an uneasy equilibrium, resting upon a "compromise between the individuated religion of devotion or obedience or rationally understood virtue, on one hand, and the collective often cosmos-related rituals of whole societies, on the other" (146). The early modern age essentially settles this compromise in favor of the former. The effect of the Christian, or Christian-Stoic, attempt to remake society thus leads to a change in our moral and social self-understandings in the direction of modern individualism. In this change, Christianity replaces the old order with a world where the "transcendent" is now unquestionably good for human beings. The world is no longer an enchanted realm of gods or spirits that can do good or ill to humans.

Taylor's historical analysis is of decisive importance for evaluating liberal multiculturalism and its understanding of contemporary political life. According to Taylor, the Christian project has moved the world in the direction of modern individualism. The clear premise of Taylor's historical analysis, a premise that is foundational for liberal multiculturalism, is that the modern individualist stance was not our original starting point. Modern individualism has been constructed, and could have

been constructed otherwise. Moreover, it is because of the hold of modern individualism, Taylor argues, that we resist master narratives, and the need to tell a story at all:

> The mistake of moderns is to take this understanding of the individual so much for granted, that it is taken to be our first-off self-understanding "naturally". Just as, in modern epistemological thinking, a neutral description of things is thought to impinge first on us, and then "values" are "added"; so here, we seize ourselves first as individuals, then become aware of others, and of forms of sociality. This makes it easy to understand the emergence of modern individualism by a kind of subtraction story: the old horizons were eroded, burned away, and what emerges is the underlying sense of ourselves as individuals. (157)

At a formal level, Taylor argues, we are necessarily socially embedded, interpreting the world through our original language, or learning our identity in dialogue with significant others. Yet, at the level of content, we can learn to be individuals, "to have our own opinions, to attain to our own relation to God, our own conversion experience" (157). Simply put, Taylor argues the primacy of the individual is itself a cultural construct, albeit a construct which can be a real human good.

The obvious question is the extent to which an exclusive humanist culture, and the master narrative on which it implicitly depends, can sustain a healthy form of modern individualism. A consistent theme in the liberal multicultural consensus is the claim that the ostensible tension between individualism and community is based upon a false dichotomy. Taylor's historical portrait is, in large part, intended to show the genesis of this misunderstanding. One of the dangers of the modern transformation, Taylor argues, is that we begin to view the rise of this moral order as the march of individualism at the expense of community (168). We associate the breakdowns which can occur because of the rise of individualism as endemic to individualism as such. Taylor asserts that while it is true that individualism can be the source of social breakdown, such breakdowns are an inevitable aspect of the changing historical forms which shape society. This is, of course,

an extension of Taylor's argument that individualism is itself constituted through changing social forms and practices. Since all changing social forms and practices require new innovations and disruptions, there is no reason to believe that modern individualism, as such, is a solvent of community. As a new form of sociality, i.e., the society of mutual exchange, modern individualism contains both new possibilities for breakdown, as well as new paths of human fullness. Our goal should therefore be an historical awareness of the ontological, and historically constituted, grounds of modern individualism, an awareness that will help us nurture the moral sources of modern individualism.[5]

"The Turning Point"

Thus far, I have been tracing key elements of Taylor's historical account and method to illustrate its relevance for explaining the rise of liberal multiculturalism. Taylor attempts to show how our modern moral order of mutual benefit, with its entrenched notion of individual rights, arises out of changing theological and social understandings. Understanding our past helps us to see how modern individualism is not a natural standpoint, but an incredibly unique stance which has arisen through transformations and corruptions of our religious heritage. As the result of these changes, our conditions of belief have changed, such that we now view society or social groups as constituted by individuals, and the world as a disenchanted place devoid of spirits or moral forces. It is a change which is required for exclusive humanism to come to the

[5] The significance of Taylor's "holist" account of individualism is elaborated upon in "Cross-Purposes" 181 - 203.

fore, and this exclusive humanism, Taylor claims, is ultimately what leads to the great diversification present in our modern age.

Fundamental to Taylor's account of the rise of modern individualism is his insistence that "exclusive humanism" was not a viable option, ready at hand, but one which needed to be created or invented within our once all-encompassing religious tradition. In both practice and theory, Taylor argues, the turning point can be discerned in 18th century Christianity, which sees the rise of providential Deism at the elite level. Taylor stresses that Providential Deism was, for most involved, a theologically persuasive doctrine. Providential Deism is a narrowing of providence, but this narrowing is in the name of the efficiency of God's design. According to Providential Deism, God's perfection requires the creation of a beneficial natural world, which is fulfilled by us insofar as we flourish in this world; constant interventions in the world would be a sign of God's imperfection.

If Providential Deism can be the source of genuine religious faith, why does it help invent exclusive humanism as a livable option? The first major change Taylor emphasizes is the new anthropomorphic emphasis upon the realization of our own good. Specifically, the anthropomorphic shift has four crucial aspects: an eclipse of the notion that we must serve a purpose beyond our own flourishing; an eclipse of the need for grace, in favor of human reason; an eclipse of the mysteries of Christianity and the world, including the mysteries of evil and God's providence; and, finally, an "eclipse of the idea that God was planning a transformation of human beings, which would take them beyond the limitations which inhere in their present condition" (224). Thus, sin is no longer a condition which requires the transformation of our being, but is wrong behavior which

can be rectified by persuasion and discipline. The second major change, alluded to above, is the arrival of the impersonal order. This impersonal order radically transforms our relation with the world: "as an immanent order, it is self-contained; that is, apart from the issue of how it arose, its workings can be understood in its own terms" (290). Our good is now realized within an impersonal world of exception-less laws—rather than a personalized world of divine interventions and spiritual possessions—to which we must conform or suffer the consequences. A third major change is the emergence of a rational or natural religion. One no longer relates to God on a personal basis, but discovers God through a rational understanding of nature and its design. This radical shift away from the enchanted pre-modern outlook is what allows for innovations in religious and moral life. Morality, in the new formulation, is no longer an obedience to God's will, or a following of God's prescriptions, but discoverable in nature and founded upon human reason. This change, of course, is a decisive break in what it means to reason about God: "the background assumption of the Deist standpoint involves disintricating the issue of religious truth from participation in a certain community practice of religious life, into which facets of prayer, faith, hope are woven" (293). Questions of our personal relation to God are now outside of this horizon. In the impersonal order, God is an entity to which we must reason towards through a disengaged process of natural discovery.

In short, Taylor argues that the 18th century changes in belief, and in our epistemic predicament, set the stage for exclusive humanism. Negatively, the enchanted world has faded away, making space for a new spiritual vision. God is no longer the guarantor of Good in a world of spirits and meaningful forces, but "the essential energizer of that ordering power through which we disenchant the world, and turn it to our purposes. As

the very origin of our being, spiritual and material, he commands our allegiance and worship" (233). With the aforementioned four-fold anthropomorphic eclipse, the shift to an impersonal order, and the rise of a rational religion based upon the dictates of nature, the "allegiance and worship" of God is easily collapsed into the pursuing of our own good. Consequently, the effect of the Deist turn is to continually remove God from our affairs, in the here and now and in the hereafter: our moral concern becomes the creation of a disciplined moral order, which can achieve peace and prosperity; God's interventions in human affairs become less and less necessary for human flourishing; the sense of God's mystery is eroded; finally, the prospect of an after-life, including the danger of divine punishment through everlasting hell, slowly begins to fade from view.

The ethic of imposed order, of the power of intra-human efforts to obtain the good, begins to appear conceivable (234). All that is now required for the possibility of exclusive humanism to be realized is "the positive move that moral/spiritual resources can be experienced as purely immanent" (244). According to Taylor, then, intra-human powers had to provide human beings with a sense of moral fullness. Yet, in the historical context, this sense of moral fullness had to meet specific aims: what was required was an aim which could meet the strong demand for the realization of the order of mutual benefit, "a functional replacement either for Christian agape, or the disinterested benevolence of the neo-Stoics" (245). Not just the realization that we can re-shape our lives, but the motivation to carry this out for all, was thus a necessary requirement for exclusive humanism. This universalizing aim, placed firmly within an immanent world, is one of the unique features of modern humanism. Although nothing in Taylor's account necessitates a return to *agape*, exclusive humanism does require a "functional substitute."

This is because exclusive humanism shares with Christianity an interventionist belief that beneficence must transcend our existing, community-bound solidarities. The pivotal question is whether exclusive humanism can provide an adequate substitute to this originally Christian aim.

"Secular Innovations" and "The Nova Effect"

In defense of the modern moral order, Taylor details several 18th century positions which arise to provide a functional substitute to Christian *agape*. The diversity of new experiences—such as the appeal to live up to one's status as a rational being, or the Kantian conception of a pure universal will of which we stand in awe, or Rousseau's call to universal sympathy—offers support for Taylor's claim that a subtraction story of religious decline must ignore the diversity of both religious and secular innovations. What is essential is not the particulars of each account, but that they are "new modes of moral experience" (251), and their expression is constitutive of the experience itself: "here in this discovery of new moral motivations is a composite, experience and reality claim together, amounting to new modes of moral life, which in placing the moral sources within us constitute forms of exclusive humanism" (253). This rise of new, moral experiences and innovations is what the subtraction stories of religious decline cannot take into account.

According to Taylor, one of the great problems with the hold subtraction stories have on the modern outlook is they are unable to appreciate these achievements of exclusive humanism. On the subtraction story view of religious decline, exclusive

humanism is our natural condition, and it only requires the liberation from falsehood or obstacles to bring it about; we simply fall into our natural condition. Yet, why would Taylor, himself a theist, believe that exclusive humanism is an *achievement*? In the last chapter, we noted how Taylor argues that exclusive humanism allows Christianity to realize its own goals. However, Taylor also articulates non-Christian reasons for viewing exclusive humanism as a gain: "it is an achievement, because getting to the point where we can be inspired and empowered to beneficence by an impartial view of things, or a sense of buried sympathy within, requires training, or inculcated insight, and frequently much work ourselves" (255). Like our theistic moral sources, then, exclusive humanism has succeeded because of devotion to a moral cause; it has raised us beyond our own personal goods to beneficence, and has extended the range of our solidarity with other human beings. As we shall see, Taylor claims that exclusive humanism fails as a comprehensive account of human life insofar as it has failed to provide a stable account of human life. There are still too many objections, both from within an immanent framework and from without. But in innovating a new path of moral sources, Taylor argues, it marks one of our greatest human achievements.

In naming the rise of exclusive humanism and its attendant moral experiences an "achievement," Taylor presumably intends to call attention to the diversity of moral sources which have been realized in history. Taylor's account implicitly provides justification for viewing atheistic, as well as theistic, forms of fullness as encompassed within his culturalist moral realism. Yet, Taylor's account of the achievement of exclusive humanism should give us pause. In fact, Taylor himself arguably opens the door to an objection by later noting that "we may judge this achievement [of experiencing

the world as purely immanent] as a victory for darkness, but it is a remarkable achievement nonetheless" (376). The great difficulty with Taylor's definition of human achievements in this context is that it seems to assume a progressive account of history, an assumption which runs counter to Taylor's own portrait of a Catholic modernity. We can recognize the achievement of our religious and exclusive humanist ancestors because our own modern moral order, at its best, encompasses these earlier moral experiences. That is, we can recognize such partial achievements as achievements because they are not in danger of occluding other and more substantial forms of human flourishing. Taylor's unstated premise appears to be that the exclusive humanisms of the 18th or 19th centuries make way for more open-minded counterparts in the contemporary age. But is this any more than a blind hope that any attempt to overturn the modern Western moral order, or to radicalize it in a direction that would overturn principles we hold dear, will be bound to fail? If this is nothing more than a blind hope that our political or intellectual enemies are bound to fail, our own moral sources turn out to be held for little more reason than that they are ours, and have proven in the past to move us; with the right historical circumstances, our moral sources might themselves be lost.

Crucial to Taylor's response to this problem is the observation that the rise of exclusive humanism eventually leads to an incredible diversification of human alternatives, what Taylor calls "The Nova Effect." The varied critiques leveled at orthodox religion, Deism, and modern humanism multiplies the religious and secular alternatives. For Taylor, this great diversification of alternatives leads to an ever-greater realization, and necessity, of the virtue of tolerance, a liberal multicultural virtue which

allows us to examine and explore the many alternatives in the modern age without having to be identified with any one in particular.

Why do we get a nova effect rather than a smooth transition from the pre-modern age to an order of mutual benefit? According to Taylor, the predicament of being a buffered self was, in the post 18th century world, spiritually unstable. On the one hand, there were multiple reasons that a return to orthodoxy was impossible: "the authoritarianism, the placing conformity before well-being, the sense of human guilt and evil, damnation, and so on," (302) were all contrary to the new modern moral order. On the other hand, this age ushers in a sense of malaise and need for meaning for theists and atheists alike. There is, among some, the sense that our predicament as buffered selves closes us off to anything beyond the human world, and that we may miss something in this exclusion; it is this unstable situation which cries out for new solutions and innovations (303). The dissatisfactions or felt lacks are various: there is a fragility to the meanings we possess; a lack of over-arching significance to our lives; our attempts to solemnize crucial moments of our lives often fall flat; and, finally, the ordinary is experienced as empty (309). Although not all share this complaint regarding the lack of meaning in the modern age—indeed, one might object that this complaint is far more intense for theists such as Taylor than exclusive humanists—what is clear is that we all understand the complaint. We can complain about the "lack of direction" of our youth and be understood. This is a radical departure from the pre-modern age, where meaning was not a contestable feature of our lives. For the masses of people in the pre-modern age, to doubt God, or one's proper station in life, was not to contest the meaning of the world, but to sin.

Part of the fragility of any single answer is modern pluralism, or the sense we all have that others think differently. This goes beyond the co-existence of multiple faiths, a co-existence which can be found in the pre-modern world: "as long as the alternative is strange and other, perhaps despised, but perhaps just too different, too weird, too incomprehensible, so that becoming that isn't really conceivable for me, so long will their difference not undermine my embedding in my own faith" (304). What is required is the sense that these other faiths or beliefs are a genuine possibility. Through "increased contact, interchange, even perhaps intermarriage, the other becomes more and more like me, in everything else but faith" (304). According to Taylor, this similarity allows the question of why one's own way of life, rather than theirs, is best. The modern age intensifies this secular possibility:

> The condition of modern society…is one of maximum homogeneity. We are more and more like each other. The distances which keep the issue between us at bay get closer and closer. Mutual fragilization is at its maximum. But this effect is now further intensified by what I have been calling the instability in the buffered identity. Cross-pressured, we are prone to change, and even multiple changes over generations. (304)

We are thus simultaneously homogenized and wrought by instability, maximizing pluralism's ability to render our particular attachments fragile.

Accordingly, the nova leads to a more widespread, but also qualitatively different, sense of unbelief. For instance, the notion of a cosmos gives way to the notion of a universe. We have moved from a bound world, with clear limits, to "one which is vast, feels infinite, and is in the midst of an evolution spread over aeons" (323). Reality does not only flee outward; we are now open to the frontier of the microscopic. In short, we are located in a universe of vast space and vast time, without a clear sense that this vast universe is shaped by a plan or design. The bound and knowable cosmos has been

replaced by an unknown reality. Although the belief that the universe is created or designed by a first Creator is still viable, it is no longer our first sense of things.

This change, from bounded cosmos to seemingly limitless universe, is often at the core of scientific accounts of religious decline. In this case, as in others, Taylor argues that the "pure face-off between 'religion' and 'science' is a chimaeara, or rather, an ideological construct" (332). The real story is one of many-leveled agendas, which cannot be reduced to this ideal portrait. Taylor's account thus argues that modern scientific accounts do not achieve what its more ardent secular supporters claim it does. The appeal of scientific materialism cannot be reduced to the persuasiveness of its findings as a refutation of faith. This is because such findings are ultimately ambiguous as regards their bearing on reality, and thus people can interpret the evidence as either telling in favor or against belief. For instance, one can find in the vastness and unfathomability of the universe divine mystery rather than a neutral world. The vastness and intricacy of the universe can inspire our awe and admiration, and thereby point us in the direction of the transcendent. Why, then, does the scientific argument have such purchase in the modern world? Its true power, Taylor claims, lies in the entire epistemology underlying the scientific stance. Modern science is persuasive, when it is, because it is the stance "of maturity, of courage, of manliness, over and against childish fears and sentimentality" (365). In "conversions" from faith to science, it is the readings of our moral predicament offered by science, as opposed to faith—its master narratives—which are ultimately decisive.

Part of the picture, Taylor argues, is that this change from cosmos to universe is not simply theoretical, but a change in our unreflective understanding, i.e., that which

provides the context of understanding for our beliefs. Our sensibility is attuned to the vastness of the universe, or the evolution of species, in a way which was incomprehensible in the pre-modern age. Our world is one of "deep time and unfathomable spaces," where much is strange. This sensibility, which is a minority position in the 18th century, is now generalized, such that everyone may at least comprehend it. The most notable fact of this new imaginary is that it can draw people in a diversity of directions: from hard to materialism to Christian orthodoxy, to a number of positions in between. The modern imaginary has encouraged materialism, and a return to the transcendent, but, more important, "it has opened a space in which people can wander between and around all these options without having to land clearly and definitively in any one" (351). This space has become so large, Taylor argues, that it can avoid the war between belief and unbelief altogether, occupying a neutral zone.

Taylor's account of the nova effect helps demonstrate how the modern moral outlook of multiculturalism is made possible by the diversification of the modern social imaginary, a diversification which allows us to avoid pitched battles between belief and unbelief. By allowing us to "wander between and around all these options without having to land clearly and definitively in any one," the nova effect allows a multitude of religious and areligious positions to function within a broad "neutral zone." Yet, this diversification and the tolerance it engenders raises an unsettling objection: is not the apparent "diversity" of this neutral zone predicated on the avoidance of the great gulf between belief and unbelief, and thus, in truth, a fundamentally deadening and homogenizing dogmatism? From another vantage point, our steadfast willingness to avoid this fundamental question—of which all of us are dimly aware—can be seen as the

great failing of our age. Our "wandering" might not be any greater openness or moral strength, but a decisive failure to think through and confront the stark alternatives before us. Why, in other words, has Taylor not simply presented us with a portrait of our embrace of being "last men"?

"Religion Today"

The relevance of *A Secular Age* for contemporary debates regarding liberal multiculturalism, as well as Taylor's account of the potential goodness of our moral "wandering," is most evident in Taylor's account of the contemporary Age of Authenticity. Echoing his earlier accounts of authenticity,[6] Taylor explains that this new "mass phenomena of 'expressive' individualism" (473) rests upon an understanding of life "that each one of us has his/her own way of realizing our humanity, and that it is important to find and live out of one's own, as against surrendering to conformity with a model imposed on us from outside, by society, or the previous generation, or religious or political authority" (475). In its most simplified form, expressivism enjoins us to "be ourselves," or "do our own thing." This understanding of the self is reflected in popular therapies, which promise self-realization or the discovery of one's true inner self. Similarly, the consumer revolution promises individuals the ability to express their unique tastes and interests on a scale unfathomable in previous centuries. In response to the cool and measured account of religious life offered in a buffered world, expressivism stresses our feelings, our emotions, or our inner faith.

[6] Taylor's most sustained account of the ideal of authenticity occurs in *The Ethics of Authenticity*.

The movement to the Age of Authenticity has profound implications for religious belief and its relation to political life. Religious or spiritual beliefs must now arise within our personal selves, or speak to us as individuals. This new understanding of the spiritual multiplies religious belief beyond limit: it "has pluralism built into it, not just pluralism within a certain doctrinal framework, but unlimited" (489). The only remaining limits placed upon our spiritual beliefs are those of the moral order of mutual benefit and freedom. That is, in following our own spirituals paths, we must also respect the paths of others. We can thus both be open to spiritual paths that require communities, including even "national communities or would-be state churches" (490), and those which require only the loosest of affinities with others. This has the effect of undermining key aspects of the previous age, namely "churches whose claim on our allegiance comes partly through their connection to a political identity" (492). Moreover, and more radically, Taylor argues that the expressive revolution has eroded the once strong link between our civilizational order and Christianity. As one witnesses in the cultural revolutions of the 1960s—and as exemplified by the sexual revolution—the pursuit of happiness comes more and more to demand the transgression of discipline and order in our personal lives (while remarkably maintaining such orders in our work lives). Such a break, Taylor argues, engenders a hostility against the Church and its stance on sexual or private ethics, and, more generally, it offends those who see themselves as "following their own path" by marking an "authoritarian" approach to law and morality. For believers, the break is a profound and deeply alienating one.

In this discussion, Taylor does not straightforwardly endorse the ideal of authenticity, but largely presents it as an empirical fact. According to Taylor,

authenticity has simply become a constitutive feature of our lived experience, and thus our goal should be to ennoble and defend its morally salutary forms, as opposed to allowing it to descend into soft relativism or attempting to deny its real moral force. As Taylor is at pains to remind us, this is our only option, since we cannot return to an age prior to the Age of Authenticity. But what is emphasized in *A Secular Age* is the extent to which Taylor's account of the "The Politics of Recognition" is, at least at important points, a Christian defense of human diversity:

> What Vatican rule-makers and secularist ideologies unite in not being able to see, is that there are more ways of being a Catholic Christian than either have yet imagined. And yet this shouldn't be so hard to grasp. Even during those centuries when the Reform-clerical outlook has dominated pastoral policy, there were always other paths present, represented sometimes by the most prominent figures, including…St. Francois de Sales and Fenelon, not to speak of Pascal, who though he gave comfort to the fear-mongers, offered an incomparably deeper vision. But as long as this monolithic image dominates the scene, the Christian message as vehicled by the Catholic Church will not be easy to hear in wide zones of the Age of Authenticity. But then these are not very hospitable to a narrow secularism either. (504)

Hence, Taylor endorses some form of the diversification of religious and spiritual belief, but he does so within a decidedly Christian framework.

Where, then, does this leave religion today? On the one hand, forms of belief face the disadvantage of their older dominant forms, which cannot be reconciled with the modern moral order. These older forms are still the object of resistance by many unbelievers. Moreover, belief faces the difficulty of the loss of religious language, a loss which is intertwined with the decline of religious practices. However "what tells against forms of unbelief is the series of nagging dissatisfactions with the modern moral order, and its attendant disciplines, the rapid wearing out of its Utopian versions, the continuing sense that there is something more" (533). This leads in a plurality of directions,

including the secular directions followed by neo-Nietzscheans, but it also can lead to faith. According to Taylor, the sense that religious belief is not of this age, or can connect us to spiritual resources across ages, can be a telling argument in favor of belief. Faith offers a way out of an age which can often feel like a prison. It is perhaps this dissatisfaction which leads to Taylor's somewhat enigmatic declaration that "we are just at the beginning of a new age of religious searching, whose outcome no one can foresee" (535). One might surmise that Taylor is alive to the deadening potential of the contemporary age, but believes this deadening of the human spirit potentially prepares the way for new forms of faith.

That the often shallow diversity of the contemporary age can lead to religion in a more powerful sense can be seen in Taylor's account of the rise of "spirituality." Spirituality, as an offshoot of the authentic ideal, is often seen as in conflict with "institutional religion" and its emphasis upon proper codes of behavior or mandated rules. From the standpoint of serious belief or unbelief, the rise of "spirituality" can easily be seen as the trivialization of religion engendered by modernity. Accordingly, Taylor notes "spirituality" has been both the subject of attack, and of trivializing support, but this is to misunderstand its moral sources:

> [The main] features of "spirituality", its subjectivism, its focus on the self and its wholeness, its emphasis on feeling, has led many to see the new forms of spiritual quest which arise in our society as intrinsically trivial or privatized. I believe this is part and parcel of [a] common error: the widespread propensity to identify the main phenomena of the Age of Authenticity with their most simple and flattened forms. This flattening effect arises out of the polemic which opposes critics of authenticity on one hand, and boosters of these trivialized forms on the other…These unwittingly conspire to offer a simplified and distorted view of what is happening in our civilization. (508)

One of the most important limitations of this trivialization is its failure to see those forms of life which do not reduce to immanent self-concern. By construing religious belief as traditional forms of belief, or unbelief as the only path of non-authoritarianism, the vast middle of spiritual and religious experience in the contemporary world is ignored. Although such spirituality is concerned with autonomous exploration, Taylor argues that nothing excludes this quest from ultimately demanding that one sacrifice or devote oneself to the transcendent. Accordingly, much of New Age spirituality often attempts to go beyond simple subjectivism, a desire that can at least potentially lead to Taylor's claims regarding transforming transcendent goals.

Taylor insists on this point "because in a way [his] whole book is an attempt to study the fate in the modern West of religious faith in a strong sense" (510). This strong sense is not a traditional religious creed or set of creeds, but one which can be defined "by a double criterion: the belief in transcendent reality, on one hand, and the connected aspiration to a transformation which goes beyond ordinary human flourishing on the other" (510). I will eventually return to why Taylor believes that the modern age is open to belief, and, at the very least, will not lead to a further retreat of religion. At this point, we can see the relevance of Taylor's account of religion today by drawing an important contrast between Taylor and Rawls on the proper role of religion in contemporary politics.

Open Secularism

Like Rawls, Taylor argues that any discussion of the role of religion in public life must begin from the fact of modern pluralism. While himself a theist, Taylor concedes that there has been a decline in religious belief and practice, even if this decline is often over-stated. It is now a pluralist world, where belief and unbelief combat one another. Religion is no longer always the default option, or supported by powerful social matrices. In fact, unbelief has now become the default in many milieus. As a consequence, there is, and should be, a principled retreat from religious life in the public sphere: "justice requires that modern democracy keep an equal distance from different faith positions" (532). In short, Taylor shares Rawls' claim that "our cohesion depends on a political ethic, democracy and human rights, basically drawn from the Modern Moral Order, to which different faith and non-faith communities subscribe, each for their own divergent reasons" (532).[7] Taylor and Rawls thus seem to agree upon the need for, and legitimacy of, an "overlapping consensus."

The practical consequences of this shared concern can be seen in the Final Report of the Consultative Commission, of which Taylor was co-chair. One of the Commission's principal conclusions was the advocacy of "open secularism," an advocacy which often reads as if it was penned by Rawls himself:

> In a society devoid of a consensus on fundamental reasons, the State must seek to avoid organizing along hierarchical lines the different conceptions of the world and of the good that motivate citizens to adhere to the basic principles of their political association. In the realm of fundamental reasons, the State, in order to truly be the State of all citizens, must remain neutral. This implies that it adopt not only an attitude of neutrality towards religions but also towards the different

[7] For an elaboration on Taylor's concept of "deep diversity," see Redhead, "Charles Taylor's Deeply Diverse Response to Canadian Fragmentation."

> philosophical conceptions that present themselves as the secular equivalents of religions. (*Consultation Commission* 134)

Like Rawls, the Commission holds that fundamental reasons which are not neutral as regards metaphysical views are necessarily prejudicial to those who do not share these views. On this basis, the Commission goes on to defend the Rawlsian claim that an overlapping consensus on basic political principles is essential for defending the equality of individuals and right of individuals to choose their own way of life. Accordingly, the Commission narrows the scope of acceptable cultural or religious groups in a manner similar to Rawls: only those "conceptions of the world and of the good" which support Quebec's basic principles can be accepted or accommodated, thereby excluding both religious and secular groups which do not respect this standard of State neutrality.

Yet, in an important sense, Taylor and Rawls' shared concern regarding an overlapping consensus is misleading. In *A Secular Age*, Taylor presents an over-arching objection to Rawls' account, an objection which illustrates the rift between Taylor and Rawls on the question of religion. According to Taylor, democracy requires that citizens speak the language in the public sphere which is most meaningful to them, and this will often be languages laden with religious meaning and arguments. The prudential desire to deny religious arguments in the public sphere may therefore be "an intolerable imposition on citizen speech" (*A Secular Age* 532). Like Sandel, Taylor stresses the importance of our language for expressing our true selves, and the necessity of religious arguments for maintaining robust citizen discourse. To deprive religious believers of the opportunity to express their arguments in their home language is therefore an unjust imposition on religious individuals. But it is also, Taylor suggests, to deprive the public sphere of real and irreducibly social goods, such as those languages of expression which cannot help

but be religious in nature. Taylor's arguments for pluralism and language thus culminate in a defense of the justness and necessity of religious pluralism in public life. On this point, one may recall Taylor's suggestion that our lack of religious languages is one of the most dangerous threats to religion today. In defending religion in the public sphere, Taylor is not simply offering a defense of extant political practice, but maintaining the conditions for religious life in the future.

This defense of religious life is evident in the Commission's use of the concept of the overlapping consensus. The Commission does not use the concept to justify emptying the public sphere of religion *qua* religion, but to block the encroachment of an anti-religious establishment:

> A system that replaces religion as the foundation of its action by a comprehensive moral and political philosophy makes those who embrace any sort of religion second-class citizens since their fundamental reasons are not enshrined in the officially recognized philosophy. In other words, the system replaces the established religion and the fundamental reasons that accompany it by a secularist, indeed antireligious, moral philosophy, which in turn establishes an order of fundamental reasons. Such a moral and political philosophy becomes a civil religion. (*Consultation Commission* 135)

The rigid secular State, which attempts to empty all of public life of religious forms, fails in its claim to neutrality insofar as it "does not treat with equal consideration citizens who make a place for religion in their system of beliefs and values" (*Consultation Commission* 128). Yet, unlike Rawls, who argues on such grounds for the deontological standard of reasonableness, which denies the legitimacy of metaphysical arguments in the public sphere, the Commission endorses the use of religious and metaphysical language in public discourse. Consequently, the Commission rather markedly departs from both the rigid secular state, and Rawls' doctrines, insofar as it argues that the true recognition and respect of differences requires negotiation and dialogue between the many elements

of a diversified society, and this negotiation and dialogue requires the fullest expression of these differences in the public realm. Although open secularism requires, like Rawls, that the cross on Mount Royal, or the crucifix in the National Assembly, be placed within a context of heritage as opposed to authority, it departs from Rawls insofar as it allows such symbols to be the site of robust public dialogue of our religious and metaphysical differences. Similarly, open secularism allows for explicitly religious symbols and dress by state employees, albeit only insofar long such employees are not in a position such that their impartiality could be called into question by their religious clothing.[8]

"The Immanent Frame"

Having shown how Taylor's master narrative leads to a defense of religious expression and religious life in the public sphere, we are now in a position to present, and evaluate, Taylor's spiritual portrait of the present age. Taylor's principal argument is that our contemporary spiritual predicament does not settle the question of belief and unbelief, but instead diversifies our spiritual options. As we shall see, however, Taylor's master narrative of secularity is not equally open to both belief and unbelief, but is, contrary to Taylor's own intentions, essentially theological in character.

Taylor's master narrative leads to a depiction of the present age which is placed within an "immanent frame." In this enframing, "the buffered identity of the disciplined

[8] As we noted in Chapter 1, on the issue of the crucifix, the Commission recommended that "the crucifix above the chair of the president of the National Assembly be relocated in the Parliament building in a place that emphasizes its meaning from the standpoint of heritage" (*Consultation Commission* 217). On the issue of religious signs, the Commission recommended that "judges, Crown prosecutors, police officers, prison guards and the president and vice-president of the National Assembly of Quebec be prohibited" from wearing them (*Consultation Commission* 271); all other government employees, including teachers, public servants, health professionals, should be authorized to wear such signs.

moves in a constructed social space, where instrumental rationality is a key value, and time is pervasively secular" (*A Secular Age* 524). Although Taylor claims the immanent frame is common to all modern Westerners, it does not necessarily entail being closed off from the transcendent. According to Taylor, it is open both to those who live the immanent order as closed to the transcendent, but also to those who want to live it as open to a transcendent realm beyond human flourishing. In short, the immanent frame permits closure but does not demand it (544). All this is to say that neither the "open" perspective nor the "closed" perspective is the rationally obvious or natural perspective. One may, legitimately, have motivations for viewing the immanent frame as open or closed.

For those who view the immanent frame as open, Taylor argues, one of the principal motivations is the awareness that our strong evaluations—the distinctions in everyday life we make between good and evil, noble and base, or virtue and vice—rest on a sense of one term being qualitatively and incommensurably higher than the other. When this sense of the higher is linked to God, or the ontically higher, the good appears to be consubstantial with God or a higher plane of being. New experiences may challenge these connections, but they may also further entrench them. A second motivation for viewing the frame as open is the profound lack we may feel in living a life purely devoted to the immanent. There is often a hostile reaction to those doctrines—such as utilitarianism—which reduce human life to the modern moral order of mutual benefit, and which seem to deny a sense of the heroic, the ethic of sacrifice, or warrior virtue. Although some reactions to this lack can correspond to the immanent (such as in Rousseau, Marx, or Nietzsche), many demand a recognition of transcendence. This may

include a transcendent grounding for our current mores or beliefs, but it may also be a breaking through of suppressed elements of our past, such as in the cases of modern pilgrimages, or events of mass celebrations of the "festive" (546).

Just as goods which are consubstantial with the transcendent move some of us to live the immanent frame as open to the transcendent, goods which are experienced as purely immanent often push us in the direction of closure to the transcendent. Moreover, the goods of our moral order can be seen as endangered by claims to the transcendent: "the demand that we reach for some higher good, beyond human flourishing, at best will distract us, at worst will become the basis for demands which will again endanger the well-oiled order of mutual benefit" (546). A concern for the goods of our moral order can thus lead us to view religion as menacing, and thereby lead us in the direction of closure. In addition, the good can itself be identified with the rejection of the higher. On this view, it is in rejecting the ascetic or heroic forms of life that one can affirm the real goods of sensual, earthly life. A related concern is the sense that we belong to a natural world, and do not or cannot escape it; it is a this-worldly sense that can be strengthened when we witness the inhumanity which sometimes seems to follow from a devotion to the other-worldly. This sense of being firmly entrenched within a natural world is further bolstered by our wonder at our arising from lower forms of nature. In fact, for the materialist, the ability of our higher being to arise from lower nature is often taken as proof that science can operate without reference to the transcendent or miracles. The explanatory successes of modern science and the successes of its associated technology can lead us to believe that it can unlock all mysteries, and one day be able to provide an explanation of all of nature and human life.

These are the main motivations for the two polar positions. However, Taylor argues, these polar positions are not the only, or even the most commonly held, positions. Taylor asserts that in the modern age, most people are cross-pressured between these two orientations. Accordingly, many respect the "scientific" shape of the immanent order, or fear religious fanaticism, yet still believe there is something beyond the immanent. The transcendent is not only seen as a threat, but also as offering a promise. The great mass of people, Taylor claims, do not stand in that open space where the issue is faced in the clearest and starkest way possible:

> We don't stand there, because not only is the immanent frame itself not usually, or even mainly a set of beliefs which we entertain about our predicament, however it may have started out; rather it is the sensed context in which we develop our beliefs; but in the same way, one or other of these takes on the immanent frame, as open or closed, has usually sunk to the level of such an unchallenged framework, something we have trouble often thinking ourselves outside of, even as an imaginative exercise. (549)

Consequently, we do not simply live in the immanent frame as such, but in more specific "pictures" or "spins" which tend to openness or closure, such as the "spin of closure" which currently dominates the Academy.

Has this diversification of positions led to an increased ability to think ourselves outside of our own frameworks, or has it, instead, merely replaced one default framework for another? As quotations such as those above indicate, Taylor seems to imply that the danger of losing sight of the partiality of our moral sources, or of the recognition that our standpoint is not the "natural" one, is a difficulty that besets our modern age, a difficulty no less great than the difficulty of thinking through regnant frameworks in previous ages. Such a danger seems to be what animates Taylor's continued polemic against subtraction stories of religious decline. In fact, Taylor seems to suggest that this is *the* difficulty of

our modern age, a danger that is simply underlined by our deep-seated awareness that we should have little confidence in believing that our way of life is *the* correct way of life. However, it should be noted that this polemic has, in a sense, the effect of resuscitating the transcendent as a bulwark against the lapse into a wholly immanent age. Taylor is at pains to remind us of ways in which the transcendent can remain vital in a world that is often predisposed to the immanent "spin."

In this account of the immanent frame, Taylor raises what is arguably the central claim of his text: "if you grasp our predicament without ideological distortion, and without blinders, then you see that going one way or another requires what is often called a 'leap of faith'" (550). First, Taylor argues that we are pulled to one reading or the other by our overall sense of human life and the cosmic order, a pull that is not simply arbitrary. When pressed, we can articulate considerations or reasons for our stance, such as notions of human excellence, or beliefs about what can transform human life, or beliefs about what is permanent in human life. Yet, these reasons rest upon a leap of faith, Taylor argues, because our view of the world goes beyond these particular insights, and is open to future experiences. Our view of the world "anticipates or leaps ahead of the reasons we can muster for it" (550). It is, Taylor declares, "something the nature of a hunch" (550). As confident as our experiences might make us regarding our own stance, "we never move to a point beyond all anticipation, beyond all hunches, to the kind of certainty that we can enjoy in certain narrow questions, say, in natural science or ordinary life" (551). For this reason, none of our "hunches" or "spins" can settle the decisive question of whether those who believe in the transcendent and its transforming power are or are not mistaken.

Suffice it to say, Taylor's discussion is a reminder of his frequent mention of his own "hunches," in *Sources* and elsewhere, as well as of his portrait of philosophy. The fully lucid perspective, Taylor seems to imply, is to recognize one's hunches as hunches, such that one can stand in the open space and see that neither of the two opposite orientations can truly refute the other. It is an open space that is only available to those who have challenged prevailing frameworks, and recognized that the debate between belief and unbelief cannot be settled on evidence alone. To see one stance as obvious or natural is to fall into illusions, or into what Taylor calls the differing "spins" on the immanent frame. As Taylor summarizes: "this debate, rather than being one between clearly opposed, internally self-consistent positions, actually tends on closer examinations into a struggle between two rival attempts to construe and come to terms with certain dilemmas: [for instance,] between aspirations to transcendence…and the cherishing of human desires" (676). Consequently, Taylor's own role in all of this is to reveal the nature and inescapability of these various dilemmas.

In his "Afterword," Taylor articulates a possible way out of such dilemmas. One must, Taylor declares, "throw away the crutches that keep you from facing the attraction of the diverse theistic and atheistic alternatives in the world" (319). The crutches, he says "are depreciating stories about others" (319). This allows for more than learning from diverse others. Taylor argues that the critical reason for engaging others is friendship and reconciliation:

> It's possible to build friendship across these boundaries based on a real mutual sense, a powerful sense, of what moves the other person….We're in the business of friendship, which incorporates the kind of understanding where each can come to be moved by what moves the other. Now, what has that got to do with Christianity? Everything, to me: that is what it's all about. It's all about reconciliation between human beings, and it doesn't simply mean within the

> church, and it doesn't mean that it's conditioned on being within the Church….I resonate with Herder's idea of humanity as the orchestra, in which all the differences between human beings could ultimately sound together in harmony. (319 - 320)

A Secular Age is thus an attempt to move us towards such a synoptic understanding, but it is an understanding which Taylor cannot articulate himself; it can only arrive through actual reconciliation and friendship in the world.[9]

What are we to make of Taylor's account of the leap of faith, and his resultant appeals to learn from and befriend the other? Can it truly attempt to embrace theistic and atheistic alternatives, or must it ultimately lead back to faith? This argument, contrary to the impressions given by Taylor in his account of the necessity of a leap of faith, seems to deepen the theological underpinnings of Taylor's project. First and foremost, the concept of a leap of faith places special importance upon that which lies beyond human knowledge. Taylor denies that attempts to give rational and this-worldly accounts of human life meet their aim. In making such claims, Taylor is essentially claiming that the fully rational life, as conceived of by exclusive humanists, is bound to fail; unbelief cannot be proven to be a superior way of life than belief. At very least, then, the necessity of a "leap of faith" suggests that we must remain open to the possibility that our dilemmas arise from the inherent tension between the this-worldly and the real force of the transcendent.

---

[9] The connection of this forward-looking Christian hope to Taylor's political work is expressed in the Commission's definition of a nation:

> Every nation is a historical project in which each individual endeavors to live according to certain values that change in the course of history. Basically, the genuine seat or ultimate pole of our attachment is less an array of customary or ethnic traits than an alliance of worldviews, some deep-seated values, hopes and projects to be pursued together. In this regard, a nation more resembles a friendship than a contract. (*Consultation Commission* 124)

Yet, Taylor's account goes beyond demanding recognition of our dilemmas, and a resultant openness to the possibility of the divine. That Taylor's account tends to a theistic portrait of human life can be seen by noting the mystery attending both the past and the future in Taylor's account. First, Taylor's attempts to retrieve our historical moral sources prompts wonder in the direction of our past. That is, Taylor's emphasis upon our historical moral sources emphasizes an account of the historical source of things which leads, of necessity, to questions regarding the "first things." Why should our particular historical sources deserve our moral respect? Why should our modern sense that we have overcome our religious past not lead to a welcome forgetting of this past? Taylor's insistence that we learn from our religious ancestors and their sense of the transcendent, or his emphasis upon that which has become ours through our religious history, serves to leave open a deeply theological possibility: that our moral sources are not simply contingent forces in our human history, but moments in a religious story which will one day cohere in a unified narrative.

As we have noted in our previous analysis, the theological character of Taylor's investigation is further emphasized in his repeated suggestions that the current tensions between contemporary cultures, or our "multiple modernities," might ultimately be resolved or understood in the future—an omega point which allows for a comprehensive understanding while maintaining real difference. As Taylor notes in his chapter on contemporary religious conversions, his own hopes for reconciliation and a diverse chorus of our human excellences are Christian hopes. According to Taylor, the goal is a conversation which can reach beyond any one order: "Inevitably and rightly Christian life today will look for and discover new ways of moving beyond the present orders to

God….Understanding our time in Christian terms is partly to discern these new paths, opened by pioneers who have discovered a way through the particular labyrinthine landscape we live in, its thickets and trackless wastes, to God" (755). Thus, Taylor's attempt to persuade thinkers of a variety of metaphysical or religious commitments, while allowing diverse forms of human fullness to flourish, seems to take place within the horizon of an essentially Christian framework. We are impelled to know our historical selves, and to learn from others in our as of yet untold future, because the Christian vision is that of a comprehensive whole with diverse and even un-Christian parts.

The decisive point, however, is that Taylor's portrait of the future often does more than reveal a theological question of which we should be aware. Taylor insists, with utmost confidence, that the decline of belief will not be total:

> There are strong incentives to remain within the bounds of the human domain, or at least not to bother exploring beyond it. The level of understanding of some of the great languages of transcendence is declining; in this respect, massive unlearning is taking place…All this is true, and yet the sense that there is something more presses in…Our age is very far from settling in to a comfortable disbelief. Although many individuals do so, and more still seem to on the outside, the unrest continues to surface. Could it ever be otherwise? (727)

What is curious about this argument—besides the fact that it seems to run counter to Taylor's claims regarding doubt and the modern age—is that Taylor's rhetorical question would surely be answered differently by many unbelievers than by Taylor, and a different reply can lead to a radically different conception of belief and unbelief. Absent a theistic construal of human life, our religious past and its diverse moral sources could conceivably have less and less relevance for our own conceptions of moral order. For those skeptical of the worth of religious accounts of human life, the sediments of our religious past contained in the present do not merely lack authority; these sediments can

also be dangerous or archaic notions of moral life, notions which will hopefully one day be forgotten. From this vantage point, unbelievers can plausibly claim that our present anxieties are not at all experienced in the same way by unbelievers as by believers who fear the loss of the transcendent. Unbelievers can plausibly claim that they have no "sense that there is something more press[ing] in." Without a belief in the real power of the transcendent, it is difficult to see why, at least within the bounds of Taylor's account, the present anxieties or felt lacks are not simply a brief road bump on the way to a forgetting of the transcendent.

To see this problem more clearly, it is helpful to return to Taylor's introduction, where he elaborates upon the meaning of religion as it is discussed in *A Secular Age*. Taylor defines religion in terms of the transcendent/immanent distinction. This distinction has obvious relevance for the Christian tradition. As Taylor notes, an essential characteristic of the Christian tradition is not simply affirming the transcendent, but being in the grips of a tension between the transcendent and the immanent. But this tension is not, Taylor declares, a universal aspect of all human experience. In a particularly revealing passage, he draws attention to an unbridgeable divide between Greek or Stoic philosophy, which steadfastly avoids portraying even Socrates' death as a renunciation, and the Christian outlook, which contains a tension between flourishing and renunciation which is only redeemable by God:

> God wills ordinary human flourishing, and a great part of what is reported in the Gospels consists in Christ making this possible for the people whose affliction he heals. The call to renounce doesn't negate the value of flourishing; it is rather to centre everything on God, even if it be at the cost of forgoing this unsubstitutable good; and the fruit of this forgoing is that it become on one level the source of flourishing to others, and on another level, a collaboration with the restoration of a fuller flourishing by God. (17)

This is the fundamental tension in Christianity, that "flourishing is good, nevertheless seeking it is not our ultimate goal. But even where we renounce it, we re-affirm it, because we follow God's will in being a channel for it to others, and ultimately to all" (18). A secular age is one where the possibility of jettisoning a conception of the transcendent, and thus being liberated from the transcendent/immanent distinction altogether, begins to appear viable. In short, a secular age is one that promises liberation from the Christian tension, and comparable religious tensions: "a secular age is one in which the eclipse of all goals beyond human flourishing becomes conceivable; or better, it falls within the range of an imaginable life for masses of people. This is the crucial link between secularity and a self-sufficing humanism" (20).

Why should we, as inhabitants of a secular age, continue to find a way of life in the grips of the immanent/transcendent distinction compelling, when we are, at the same time, confronted with lives which do not contain such a "fundamental tension," and the possibility of escaping this distinction altogether? Negatively, Taylor's reply is that the path of exclusive humanism or the immanent counter-enlightenment have proved too unstable to be definitive answers; the affirmation of the merely human has too often appeared deadening, and unable to achieve a stable fullness for human beings. Yet, in order for Taylor's historical account to be relevant, Taylor must provide a positive account for theistic construals of human life. Taylor's implicit reply is that for some, their experience of the divine is something which cannot be renounced; others have experienced the moral fullness which can come through a belief in the transcendent. Such believers might still view other non-theistic ways of life as "reasonable," or expressions of real goods, but they cannot accept that the Christian distinction between

the transcendent and the immanent is an empty one. Crucially, this reply rests upon the non-neutral claim that there exist in our secular age believers who have experience of the transforming power of the transcendent, or at least those who believe they have such an experience and who cannot be refuted by reason. Without expressions of revelation in the world, the secular project of achieving a self-sufficing humanism would presumably be complete—even if it would lead to an essential deadening of the human spirit. Pushed to its final conclusion, Taylor's own unwillingness to jettison the transcendent/immanent distinction must rest upon his own experience of, or belief in others' experience of, the transformative power of the transcendent.

The political significance of this fundamental theoretical problem is that it reveals a question which is left unresolved by Taylor's account of reconciliation. The conflicts between diverse cultures and religious communities in contemporary life lead us beyond the recognition of any claim to moral fullness to a concrete evaluation of these claims. One cannot conclusively speak of human achievements and their potential "darkness" without, at the same time, evaluating the actual merits of the diverse claims of human flourishing. As Taylor himself often indicates, a view of human life which centers upon notions of human fullness and recognition of the accomplishment of cultural or religious groups cannot avoid the need to make evaluative distinctions between individuals and groups. In "The Politics of Recognition," Taylor is explicit that the conception of recognition is empty unless it leads to a substantive evaluation of cultures in terms of their actual merits. To be recognized for their worth, religions must claim to be superior in a certain respect. Yet, in our above analysis, Taylor's culturalist moral realism seems to be so expansive so as to avoid making practical distinctions in the here and now. Does

Taylor's theoretical account of culturalist moral realism lead to an easygoing relativism in the concrete?

The Consultative Commission: A Time for Reconciliation

I would like to conclude my discussion of Taylor by suggesting that the apparent easing of his culturalist moral realism, and particularly his emphasis upon the recognition of our human achievements, must be read in light of his own sensitivity to the demands of political practice. Rhetorically, Taylor allows the often passionate and fierce political demands for recognition by cultural, theistic, and atheistic groups to ease his equally important, yet practically more remote, demand for the evaluation of the merits of these cultures and religions. In "The Politics of Recognition," this is most evident in Taylor's insistence that the evaluation of cultures (and presumably religions) be undertaken with the initial moral presumption in favor of the worth of group attachments which have proven to move large numbers of human beings for long periods of time. To not afford other cultures or religions this presumption, Taylor claims, is to engage in ethnocentricism. In this final section, I will argue that an awareness of this political tension between the moral presumption in favor of equality needed for an open-minded discovery of the other and the moral demand for the substantive evaluation of cultures is, for Taylor, a necessary supplement to the modern difficulties plaguing multiculturalism and appeals for accommodation. To show how Taylor's intellectual project rests upon a fundamental deference to political practice, and an unease at liberal multicultural attempts to provide a code of governance, I will highlight two aspects of the Consultative

Commission: first, the Commission's mandate and its general conclusions; and, second, the Commission's stance on interculturalism.

The Order in Council of the Quebec government provided the Consultative Commission with the explicit mandate to "take stock of accommodation practices related to cultural differences and analyse the attendant issues bearing in mind, in particular, experience outside Quebec" (*Consultation Commission* 276). This mandate was to be carried out through extensive consultation with individuals and organizations, and was to formulate recommendations "ensuring that accommodation practices related to cultural differences conform to Quebec's values as a pluralistic, democratic, egalitarian society" (*Consultation Commission* 275). One interpretation of this mandate was the narrow claim that the Commission should essentially concern itself with technical and legal questions concerning accommodation, providing guidelines and criteria to settle accommodation controversies. Given our earlier analyses, we should be unsurprised that this narrow interpretation existed, and that a Commission co-chaired by Taylor would go beyond it. The apparent crisis required a broad mandate, the Commission declared, because an analysis of accommodation practices required an analysis of cultural practices and beliefs, and, in particular, religious life (*Consultation Commission* 33).

Accordingly, the basic orientation of the Commission was to avoid formulating clear and specific rules or legal guidelines on accommodation, and to place itself within the historical practices and beliefs of Quebec. The unifying aim of the Commission's analyses and proposals was "integration in equality," a unifying aim which, the Commission argued, was already shared by Quebec's majority and minority cultures. Having articulated their mandate and aims in these broad terms, the Commission's

overarching conclusion was that Quebec's collective life was not in crisis. The source of the apparent crisis, the Commission argued, was the issue of recognition: threatened by their culture's precarious place in North America, members of Quebec's majority culture had exaggerated and distorted the challenges facing Québécois culture. Although the issues were real, the unease of the Québécois majority was exacerbated by irresponsible media attention, which inevitably focused upon the rare accommodation requests which proved troublesome, and largely ignored the vast majority of successful accommodations at the citizen level. In response, the Commission advocated delegating the contemporary issues of reasonable accommodation to the citizenry. The Commission provided three basic reasons: the bulk of accommodation requests were already, and would continue to be, solved at the citizen level; deference to the citizen level heightens the responsibility of individuals; and, finally, "the values to be promoted in respect of the citizen route," namely the values of negotiation, reciprocity, and agreement, rather than confrontation and division, "are precisely those that underpin interculturalism" (*Consultation Commission* 64).

The Commission's avoidance of the legal route on reasonable accommodation should remind us of Taylor's reservations regarding the attempt to institute single codes as a means of adjudicating between our necessarily diverse and contradictory political principles. Taylor argues that the problem with such codes, "whose most prominent and visible form is the constitutionalization of various charters of rights and non-discrimination" (*A Secular Age* 704), are several. First, no pre-fixed code will be able to foresee all future possibilities, and thus a fixed code may limit our flexibility in adjusting to novel situations. Second, and as emphasized above, the plurality of goods and

principles often come into conflict, a fact which often requires the suspension of regnant codes. Third, the plurality of goods and principles can multiply and intensify the occurrence of novel situations which we are unable to foresee, in part because codes must deal with human agents who will choose to behave in unique ways, or who will have been induced to interpret their own claims in unique ways (704-705). Finally, and most importantly for the present case, ruling codes can destroy the possibility of political leadership. In politics, one can sometimes "induce people to rise to another level" (706), and such efforts are frustrated by fixed rules and procedures. Presumably the reconciliation suggested by the Commission is such an example of attempting to raise a people to another level.

The Commission's elevating intent can, in part, be seen in the tone of the Commission's aims and conclusions. The Commission, when confronted with real examples of the difficulties plaguing attempts at reasonable accommodation, is reassuring. According to the Commission, Quebec's way of life is secure, and its ability to strike a balance between the cultural and religious interest of the majority, and "integration in equality," is not only possible, but is already taking place. Suffice it to say, this tone is in rather dramatic contrast to Taylor's project in *A Secular Age*. One of the unifying aims of *A Secular Age* is to articulate and remind us of the profound doubt which we all feel, and should feel, as regards our ways of life. The modern age is one in which we face stark questions which often do not admit of easy solutions. Although a moderate supporter of modernity and its moral sources, Taylor is far from optimistic; the fragility of both secular and religious alternatives, Taylor intimates, has produced a crisis of meaning in the modern age. Why, then, the contrast? The obvious reason is that the

Commission was intensely concerned with the proper conditions for "reconciliation," and such conditions were Quebecers' security in their way of life. As explicitly noted by the Commission, the failure of Quebecers' to feel recognized for their cultural merits and distinctness was, in essence, the "root cause" of the reasonable accommodation crisis in Quebec. Insofar as the conditions for reciprocity and integration are security, rather than philosophical doubt, the Commission's challenge was to prompt openness to diverse minorities, while maintaining at least the illusion of the durability of the majority culture.

This attempt by the Commission to navigate between the affirmation of cultural and religious diversity, and an acute sensitivity to Quebec's majority culture and its fears, brings us to the Commission's account of "interculturalism." The context of the distinction between multiculturalism and interculturalism is the almost unanimous hostility to multiculturalism in French Quebec, in part arising from the political origins of Canadian multiculturalism. As the Commission noted, this sentiment was nearly unanimous among French-speaking Quebecers; in contrast, most Quebecers were strong supporters of interculturalism. According to the Commission, interculturalism is an alternative to multiculturalism that has been realized in Quebec through political practice. But what, exactly, is interculturalism, and how does it differ from multiculturalism? According to the Commission, Quebec interculturalism:

> a) institutes French as the common language of intercultural relations; b) cultivates a pluralistic orientation that is concern with the protection of rights; c) preserves the necessary creative tension between diversity, on the one hand, and the continuity of the French-speaking core and the social link, on the other hand; d) places special emphasis on integration and participation; and e) advocates interaction. (*Consultation Commission* 121)

What seems to distinguish interculturalism from multiculturalism, then, is an increased concern for the survival of the French-language culture, and the "social bond and the

symbolic references underlying it" (*Consultation Commission* 118). The problem facing Canadian multiculturalism, which Quebec interculturalism rectifies, is that it "emphasizes diversity at the expense of continuity" (*Consultation Commission* 121). Consequently, the great advantage of the Quebec model is that it respects the two great poles of a pluralistic society: first, a concern for unity and the social bond; and, second, the recognition of diverse cultures.

But how real is this difference between Canadian multiculturalism and Quebec interculturalism? As the Commission itself goes on to note, the truncated version of multiculturalism that is dominant in Quebec—which views multiculturalism as a system which only attempts to recognize difference, and is therefore unconcerned with integrationist elements such as national languages and intercultural exchange programs (*Consultation Commission* 192)—is a caricature of multiculturalism. Properly understood, Canadian multiculturalism has a strong integrationist element, and attempts to respect the need for unity. What is striking, however, is that the Commission seems willing to trade on this caricature (Forbes, "Charles Taylor as a Theorist of Multiculturalism" 435 - 437). The Commission advocates Québécois interculturalism as a substantial improvement upon multiculturalism, and the proper means for simultaneously preserving a majority culture and accommodating cultural diversity. Yet, at the same time, the Commission also admits that the long time survival of the Québécois nation depends upon an integration of diverse minorities, a series of integrations which is bound to transform the majority culture. Interculturalism, it would seem, is plagued by the same concerns or challenges as multiculturalism.

Hence, the exaggerated difference between interculturalism and multiculturalism appears to be an edifying narrative, which can help elevate the Quebec majority to a spirit of compromise and negotiation. But there also appears to be a serious core behind this exaggerated distinction, one which centers upon language as a social good. As noted by the Commission, it is not contrary to the aims of multiculturalism to encourage the use of a national language for the sake of social solidarity and collective life. Such a common meeting ground might, in fact, facilitate dialogue and negotiation between cultures. Yet, as we saw in our analysis of Trudeau, what is absent in Canadian multiculturalism is the need or the desire to defend a cultural good that is embodied in the English language or French language itself. Language, in the Canadian case, is viewed as an instrumental good. In contrast, interculturalism attempts to do justice to the desire, frequently voiced by the Québécois, to preserve the French language and its cultural expressions beyond their lifetimes; it potentially does justice to a good which is viewed as transcending its usefulness to individuals.

Of course, both the Commission and Taylor seem to indicate that the culture preserved by the French language will be the site of rather substantial innovation and transformation, a fact that is often overlooked by Québécois nationalists. However, Taylor's account of language also suggests that certain goods may be untranslatable from one language to another, and thus lost when their home language is lost. On this point, it is important to note that Taylor's concerns regarding the decline of religious language might extend to a concern regarding the fate of the French language in Quebec. As Taylor notes in *A Secular Age*, within a language, "a word can serve to open a new space, reveal a new reality, make contact with the hidden or lost. And this power only comes

against a whole background of complementary meanings" (760). To lose a language is potentially to lose such complementary meanings and the realities they help reveal. In the case of Quebec, the loss of the French language could mean the loss of a substantial and revelatory connection to its Catholic tradition and the other realities of its spiritual history.

What, then, is the relation between Taylor's political life, and his work in *A Secular Age*? Taylor concludes his afterword on *A Secular Age* by discussing the importance of the Commission, and, in the process, sheds crucial insight into this relation. Taylor's description of his role in the Commission centers upon the aim of restraining our excessive impulses, and creating space for a genuine and reconciliatory conversation. In making this case, Taylor emphasizes how the predicament in Quebec is exemplary of our modern predicament:

> I don't think we're going to manage to get through this tremendous diversification of Western society with a decent society unless we not only have the right rules and the right principles and so on, but have enough people who have this kind of gut sense that there's something really valuable in that other person—and other view, etc.—and are willing to talk to them, because when the rubber hits the road and the going gets really tough, when certain media are, let's say, not behaving entirely responsibly in whipping up the wrong kinds of sentiments, it matters a lot. See—in politics you discover this—sometimes the small battalions really count. If there are enough people here and there who have enough meeting and understanding of the others, they can stand like firebreaks in a forest fire. We were in the business, in a certain sense, of trying to multiply those firebreaks, and so this particular political action I consider to be entirely in continuity with the conversations and exchanges that have animated the present [collection of essays on *A Secular Age*]. I value this tremendously—this kind of exchange. I value this personally. I value this in terms of my faith. I value this in terms of what I can discover. But I also value this because I see that it's something we really need in our present predicament. And so for all these reasons, the attempt of *A Secular Age*—to lay out a basis of conversation…–this is the kind of thing we have to be doing. ("Afterword: Apologia pro Libro suo" 321)

I have quoted Taylor at length because it is an especially frank discussion of Taylor's attempt to affect our "gut sense" of the other, an attempt which is intertwined with his concern for the stories we tell ourselves, his own Christian faith, and his own conception of the role of theory in political life. In contrast to the ambitious aims of Trudeau, Taylor's political aims are not transformative, at least in the most immediate sense. Rather, Taylor's mention of encouraging "firebreaks" in the midst of a forest fire gives the clear impression that the intervention of political theory into political life is, for Taylor, a project of moderating political practice for the sake of engendering "conversation."

In Taylor's analogy, it seems clear that the run-away forest fire is the political passions and xenophobia of the majority culture, passions and xenophobia which have been fueled by a perceived lack of recognition. Although the Commission could provide a politically salutary account of the current state of reasonable accommodation in Quebec, and encourage the expression of our differences in public spaces, it could not present an ideal transformative vision which could solve Quebec's tougher dilemmas. Taylor seems to imply that, when faced with a politically passionate and misguided majority, a theoretical articulation of our predicament or a theoretical code by which to guide political practice is not the best means to begin a conversation. For this reason, the Commission frequently recommends that the problem of reasonable accommodation be delegated, whenever possible, to the level of the citizen or parliamentary institutions in consultation with citizens. What is to be avoided are attempts to redress problems of accommodation through legal means, where codified "solutions" distract us from the

process of dialogue and negotiation among citizens that is required for a genuine reconciliation to take place.

From the standpoint of theory, Taylor seems to be saying, our modern predicament points in the direction of an awareness of the diversity of moral sources which move us, a diversity which should elicit our wonder and our curiosity. A conversation is needed, Taylor declares, because our own accounts are still too partial, and too full of doubt, to be able to proceed strictly on our own terms. Insofar as the means to such a conversation will be innovations and discoveries that can only be achieved in and through practice, it is the role of the theorist to pay heed to such practices, and to gently guide them in a spirit of reconciliation and friendship.

Conclusion

Religious diversity, by raising the specter of conflict over transcendent aims and aspirations, poses an acute challenge to liberal multiculturalism. Liberal multiculturalism purports to affirm diversity, yet it is largely limited to embracing or affirming already liberalized cultures and religions. Thus, liberal multiculturalism's accommodation of cultural minorities appears to be more superficial than substantial. In spite of this basic difficulty, there remains a strong counter-argument to be made on behalf of liberal multiculturalism. Might not liberal multiculturalism's ability to liberalize cultures and religions, and thereby constrain "religious diversity," be one of its greatest strengths?

Unlike many of his intellectual successors, Trudeau provides a clear-sighted endorsement of liberal multiculturalism's transformative aspirations. Trudeau is explicit on the crucial point: a policy of liberal multiculturalism must subvert the claims of transcendent nationalism insofar as transcendent collective goals call into question the sovereignty of the individual. To not insist upon this need for the transformation of cultures and religions is to fail to realize the threat that claims to the transcendent pose to liberal multicultural politics. First, ethnic or cultural nationalisms, insofar as they tend to promote or uphold transcendent goods which call forth our obligations, threaten the peace and stability that is at the core of liberal political life. Absent such peace and stability, the prospect of being free to pursue one's own conception of the good life and to come to know and ultimately to transcend one's own cultural comportment is potentially undermined. Second, and more radically, the vitality of transcendent collective goals

calls into question the very truth of the liberal insistence that the individual is sovereign. Without a concrete demonstration of liberal multiculturalism's ability to speak to human beings' cultural and moral concerns, the liberal assertion that the individual is sovereign ultimately falls flat. Thus, in actively subverting such rival claims to sovereignty, liberal multiculturalism does not simply secure the conditions for its own flourishing, it also attempts to vindicate its own legitimacy.

This second concern helps explain the significance of Trudeau's forward-looking constitutional project. Trudeau's constitutional project underlines how the decisive question is not whether the transcendent is operative in contemporary politics, but whether modernization and liberalization will eventually lead to the demise of the transcendent. As evidenced by Trudeau's endorsement of official multiculturalism, his addition of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to the Canadian Constitution, and his welcoming of a policy of open immigration, Trudeau's political rhetoric and actions were aimed at constituting a people who could overcome the present climate of transcendent nationalisms and prejudices. From this vantage point, the complaint that liberal multiculturalism is multiculturalism with limitations and restrictions rings hollow; Trudeau tacitly affirms such restrictions as cultivating modern and liberal cultures over and against pre-modern and illiberal cultures.

Trudeau's refusal to accede to the contemporary conception of culture, as an attachment which few individuals are capable of transcending, is therefore an essential aspect of his political theory. Culture must be an instrumental good that we are capable of transcending if liberalism's most radical challengers are to be rebutted. As long as one

maintains that individuals cannot escape their cultural comportments, one opens the door to the possibility that such cultural attachments might include goods which challenge or are in tension with the aims and aspirations of liberalism. For this reason, Trudeau's conception of liberal multiculturalism explicitly rests upon a permanent standard of liberal right, one which can be realized through liberal multicultural political life. Rather than shirk this political and theoretical necessity, Trudeau offers a reminder of its importance.

But might not contemporary theorists of liberal multiculturalism be more aware of the political limitations or necessities of liberal multiculturalism, such as the inevitability and inescapability of our more particular national, ethnic, or cultural attachments? In other words, was Trudeau simply naïve to believe polyethnic liberalism could dispense with nationalism? The concern among contemporary liberal multiculturalists for extant practice has not only occluded the questions or challenges that must be faced by liberal multicultural theory, it has also been decidedly partial in the cultural realities and traditions it cites as evidence. A particularly revealing example of this avoidance is the willingness of Kymlicka and Rawls to assume, without much evidence or support, that their abstract theoretical accounts of liberal multiculturalism are consonant with the bulk of religious thought and practice. The possibility that a religious sense of that which transcends the individual might pose a serious and "reasonable" challenge to liberal thought and practice, or the possibility that liberalization might entail cultural loss for particular groups, is merely assumed away. Rawls and Kymlicka, of course, make mention of the compatibility of their models with the main religious traditions, yet they

fail to take seriously the possibility that religious traditions, if engaged on their own terms, would largely reject the basic tenets of liberal multiculturalism. And unlike Trudeau's forward-looking political and constitutional vision, which attempts to give a concrete demonstration of the superiority of liberal multicultural practice, Rawls and Kymlicka never provide the means for adjudicating the dispute between liberal multiculturalism and its most radical religious challengers.

All this is to say that neither Rawls nor Kymlicka fully faces the fact that liberal multiculturalism, if successful, transforms the meaning and nature of religious practice and experience. Instead of providing reasons for the goodness of these transformations, an account that may itself be compelling, both Rawls and Kymlicka largely deny that liberalism restricts the bounds of religious beliefs and practices in any limiting sense. Neither theorist fully confronts the possibility that some illiberal religious aspirations are good and right, and might be unavailable within a liberal multicultural regime. In short, contemporary theory has tended to avoid the full weight of the challenge religious diversity poses to liberal multiculturalism.

While Trudeau's vision is ultimately forward-looking, and must be assessed as such, it is not without its failings. As we have seen, the question of the transformative effects of liberal multiculturalism has defined Canada's constitutional politics in the last few decades. Quebec has resisted Canada's liberal multicultural constitutional design precisely because it has seemed to deny the distinctness of the Québécois, a cultural conflict between English and French Canada that has often been sustained by a small but powerful religious minority within the nationalist movement. According to Québécois

nationalists, Trudeau's liberal multiculturalism presents an impoverished conception of political life. For such nationalists, liberal multiculturalism can never truly recognize and accommodate the Québécois community in its particularity. Although one should be impressed by the successes of Trudeau's project, and the extent to which it has come to define the Canadian identity, the continued resistance to his liberal multicultural project suggests that the question which is meant to be resolved by Trudeau's transformative project has yet to be resolved. Can Trudeau's liberal multiculturalism, and its instrumental defense of culture, provide a sufficiently meaningful way of life for human beings, or are we, and should we be, beholden to attachments which transcend us as individuals?

Charles Taylor's attempt to show how modernization and secularization is actually the source of great diversity in our spiritual lives, and how the disputes regarding the transcendent are a permanent feature of human life, provides us with the most compelling critique of Trudeau's liberal multicultural project. To see how Taylor's account of the diversification of our spiritual lives leads us beyond liberal multiculturalism, it is necessary to reconsider the full scope of Taylor's project. First and foremost, Taylor reminds us of the significance of our past for interpreting our contemporary situation. As Taylor notes, our contemporary world and our spiritual predicament is often defined in terms of our religious past. Insofar as we see the modern age of disenchantment as an achievement, a struggle which has taken place historically, we cannot escape an important reference to God in our age. Coming to grips with our diverse religious histories is thus built into the very fabric of contemporary life.

However, unlike Trudeau, who turns to the West's past to show the excesses and dangers of transcendent nationalism, Taylor turns to this past to illustrate its power in shaping and sustaining Western practice. For this reason, Taylor's over-arching approach to diversity, unlike the approaches of Trudeau, Rawls, and Kymlicka, is to call for engagement of our diverse histories and self-understandings.

Specifically, Taylor's historical project calls for an intellectual and moral openness to the diversity of human flourishing in the contemporary age. Crucial to the persuasiveness of Taylor's characterization of contemporary diversity is the still vital dispute between believers and unbelievers, a dispute which turns on the diversity of opinions regarding the reality of the transcendent. As Taylor argues, the "four-cornered debate"—between traditional or pre-modern religion, exclusive humanism, the neo-Nietzschean counter-Enlightenment, and modernity-affirming theism—illustrates the extent to which we are moved by a real and substantial diversity of moral sources, no single one of which has been able to refute or silence the other.

For Taylor, this fact of modern life has clear political implications. According to Taylor, recognizing this secular and theological diversity, rather than ignoring or attempting to overcome it, should be the aim of modern politics. Taylor's advocacy of intercultural dialogue and citizen discourse is in direct contrast to legal and codified solutions to cultural and religious diversity, such as the constitutional solution to ethnic disputes offered by Trudeau, or the liberal multicultural models offered by Kymlicka. According to Taylor, one of the primary failings of the liberal multicultural project is the way in which it can actually foreclose robust dialogue between diverse groups. By

promising to adjudicate our moral disputes through abstract rules and procedures, our willingness and motivation to come to know the other is undermined. Thus, liberal multicultural models potentially inhibit genuine intercultural communication and dialogue by elevating a single legal code to the detriment of citizen dialogue and Parliamentary institutions. In short, abstract political models or rules detract from the concrete realities of religious and cultural diversity, and the possibility of coming to know the other through robust dialogue. It is fitting, then, that Taylor's own political leadership seems aimed at having us appreciate the diversity of goods which have moved human beings, as opposed to cultivating political forms and solutions which would deny or detract from such differences.

What, however, of the claims of thinkers such as Rawls and Kymlicka, which ultimately rest upon shared principles of right? As Taylor rightly observes, to assume such a consensus is to deny the intellectual climate of the contemporary age. Rather than providing certainty on right principles, this climate has been one of profound doubt and instability. Moreover, the plurality of our moral sources, no single one of which is easily or straightforwardly affirmed, cannot help but impinge upon the validity or persuasiveness of liberal multicultural models. For instance, Rawls' attempt to constrain political life and political debate to shared political principles rests upon a contestable portrait of our cultural and religious lives. Rawls simply refuses to take seriously the possibility that our modern doubt might mean the rightness of theological alternatives, alternatives which do not share his conception of what is reasonable. In contrast, Taylor's account of the failings of exclusive humanism helps us see how the modern

condition demands openness to the diversity of modern spiritual life, or at least an actual demonstration of the wrongness of religious positions which do not accord with liberalism.

Although Taylor is instructive for highlighting the significance of the question of the proper role of the transcendent for interpreting modernity, his own theistic account seems partial on a number of grounds. First, Taylor's frequent mention of the sense of loss that attends the contemporary age rarely makes mention of the fact that this sense of loss is, or least might be, felt much more acutely by theists than by exclusive humanists. This emphasis upon the losses that surround the modern age is particularly pronounced when coupled with Taylor's decisive certainty regarding the permanence of the transcendent in human life. In fact, Taylor's confidence in the continuing reality of the transcendent in our moral lives seems to cut against his claims regarding our modern condition of profound doubt. A true expression of doubt regarding the transcendent would be to entertain the possibility that the transcendent may one day be forgotten or overcome. Although Taylor gives plenty of historical and psychological evidence to suggest that the transcendent might not be easily forgotten, none of this evidence approaches a demonstration of the necessity of the transcendent for human life. Might Taylor himself be unwilling to admit the real and powerful challenges religious life has faced as a result of the modern project?

Taylor's theological certainties also seem to infuse his political appeals with an unwarranted optimism. I have been arguing that, on a moral and theoretical level, there is much to recommend Taylor's call for dialogue and conversation; the plurality of religious

and areligious perspectives in the modern world, and the fragility of our own beliefs, seems to demand such openness. Yet, the great problem with Taylor's call for robust political dialogue is that it fails to address the extent to which this "conversation" between diverse cultural and religious groups might eventually produce political struggles and the cultivation of political and religious passions which are antithetical to liberal government. While the political confrontations and discourse Taylor calls for might lead to a broadening of our moral and intellectual horizons, this does not rule out the possibility that such cultural contact will not, at the same time, lead to an increase in cultural or religious conflict. The price to pay for Taylor's moral project might, in fact, be an increase in such conflict. In short, Taylor's attempts to have religious accommodation and dialogue take place at the citizen or political level—the basic advice of the Commission—is fraught with an unjustified optimism regarding the solutions available through intercultural negotiation.

In spite of the unjustified optimism of Taylor's account, Taylor's recent work on secularization provides a crucial contribution to contemporary discussions of liberal multiculturalism. In tracing the dispute between belief and unbelief that has shaped Western modernity, Taylor helps clarify the extent to which our own intellectual foundations call for an engagement and openness to a diversity of religious and secular perspectives. Similarly, Taylor's work on secularization helps demonstrate the extent to which contemporary accounts of liberalism and multiculturalism have failed to confront the questions posed to political theory by religious claims and political practice. The questions surrounding religious and cultural diversity include the extent to which

liberalism has or will be able to provide a meaningful account of human life which is not riddled with irresolvable dilemmas and tensions.

What, then, is to be learned from the challenge religious diversity poses to liberal multiculturalism? Above all, the failure of liberal multiculturalism to resolve the dispute between belief and unbelief should impel us to seek a fuller and richer account of political theory than one which would attempt to deny or hide our most urgent moral and political questions. The challenge religious diversity poses to liberal multiculturalism helps reveal the fragility of our own moral principles, and the existence of others who do not share these principles or convictions. Recent attempts to settle the tensions in liberal multiculturalism through refined liberal multicultural models, or refined articulations of the true meaning of liberalism, miss the essential point. This dispute between belief and unbelief, when squarely confronted, illuminates the profound doubt regarding the good which is at the heart of the modern age. Although this doubt can be, and indeed should be, unsettling, it can also prod us into taking our great moral and political questions seriously. While the current debates surrounding liberalism and multiculturalism have often failed to meet this lofty aim, they do offer a powerful reminder of the challenges still facing us in a secular age.

Works Cited

Abbey, Ruth. *Charles Taylor*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. "Identity, Authenticity, Survival: Multicultural Societies and Social Reproduction." *Multiculturalism: Examining "The Politics of Recognition."* Ed. Amy Gutmann. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994. 149-164.

Barry, Brian. *Culture and Equality: An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Baubock, Rainer. *Transnational Citizenship: Membership and Rights in Transnational Migration*. Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1994.

Bisoondath, Neil. *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada.* Toronto: Penguin, 1994.

Bourassa, Henri. "The French Language and the Future of Our Race." *French Canadian Nationalism: An Anthology*. Ed. Ramsay Cook. Toronto: Macmillan, 1969. 132-146.

Cairns, Alain C. *Charter versus Federalism: the Dilemmas of Constitutional Reform*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992.

Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Debates.* 28th Parliament, 3rd Session, 1970-1972, vol. VIII. October 8, 1971. Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1971.

---. *A Preliminary Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*. Canada: Queen's Printer, 1965.

---. Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. 4 vols. Ottawa, Canada: Queen's Printer, 1970.

Diggins, John Patrick. "The Godless Delusion." *New York Times Book Review.* 16 December 2007: 15.

Fish, Stanley. "Boutique Multiculturalism, or Why Liberals Are Incapable of Thinking about Hate Speech." *Critical Inquiry* 23 (1997): 378-395.

Forbes, Hugh Donald. "Immigration and Multiculturalism vs. Quebec Separatism: An Interpretation of Canadian Constitutional Politics since 1968." Paper presented at

the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Hyatt Regency Chicago and the Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers, Chicago, IL. Aug 30, 2007. <http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p211646_index.html> [Dec 1, 2007]

---. "The Realism of Charles Taylor's Multicultural Idealism: Interpreting an Interpretation." Conference on Political Realism from Trudeau to Taylor, June 2001, University of Ottawa. Unpublished conference paper, 2001.

---. "Trudeau as the First Theorist of Canadian Multiculturalism." *Multiculturalism and the Canadian Constitution*. Ed. Stephen Tierney. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007. 27-42.

---. "Charles Taylor as a Theorist of Multiculturalism Recognition/Authenticity." *Recovering Reason: Essays in Honor of Thomas L. Pangle*. Ed. Timothy Burns. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010. 421-442.

Ford v. Quebec (Attorney General), [1988] 2 S.C.R. 712.

Glover, Jonathan. "God Loveth Adverbs." *London Review of Books* 22 November 1990: 12-13.

Goodin, Robert E. "Liberal Multiculturalism: Protective and Polyglot." *Political Theory* 34 (2006): 289-303.

Hamilton, Alexander, John Jay, and James Madison. *The Federalist Papers*. Ed. Clinton Rossiter. New York: Signet, 1999.

Hogg, Peter. "Canada: Privy Council to Supreme Court." *Interpreting Constitutions: A Comparative Study*. Ed. Jeffrey Goldsworthy. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

The Holy Bible: King James Version. Nashville: Nelson, Thomas, 1989.

Kukathas, Chandran. "The Life of Brian, or Now For Something Completely Difference-Blind." *Multiculturalism Reconsidered: Culture and Equality and Its* Critics. Ed. Paul Kelly. Cambridge: Polity, 2002. 184-203.

---. "Are There Any Cultural Rights?" *Political Theory* 20 (1992): 105-139.

Kymlicka, Will. "Being Canadian." *Government and Opposition* 38 (2003): 357-385.

---. "The Canadian Model of Diversity." *Multiculturalism and the Canadian Constitution.* Ed. Stephen Tierney. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007. 61-90.

---. "An Emerging Consensus?" *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 1 (1998): 143–157.

---. *Liberalism, Community, and Culture.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

---. *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

---. *Politics in the Vernacular*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Laitinen, Arto. "Culturalist Moral Realism." *Acta Philosphica Fennica* 71 (2002): 115-132.

Laforest, Guy. *Trudeau and the End of a Canadian Dream*. Trans. Paul Browne, Leduc and Michelle Weinroth. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995.

Larmore, Charles. "Review of Sources of the Self." *Ethics* 102.1 (1991): 158-162.

Lenihan, Don. "Liberalism and the Problem of Cultural Membership: A Critical Study of Kymlicka." *Canadian Journal of Law and Jurispvudence* 4 *(*1991): 401-441.

MacIntyre, Alasdair. "The Spectre of Communitarianism." *Radical Philosophy* 70 (1995): 34-35.

McRoberts, Kenneth. *Misconceiving Canada: The Struggle for National Unity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Melzer, Arthur. "Esotericism and the Critique of Historicism." *The American Political Science Review.* 100 (2006): 279-295.

Miller, David. *On Nationality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Morgan, Michael L. "Religion, History, and Moral Discourse." *Philosophy in an Age of Pluralism: The Philosophy of Charles Taylor in Question*. Ed. James Tully. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. 49-66.

Murray, Father John Courtney. *We Hold These Truths: Catholic Reflections on the American Proposition*. 2nd ed. Lanham, MD: Sheed & Ward, 1986.

Nationalist Socialist Party v. Skokie, 432 U.S. 43 (1977).

O'Neill, Daniel I. "Multicultural Liberals and the Rushdie Affair: A Critique of Kymlicka, Taylor, and Walzer." *Review of Politics* 61 (1999): 219-250.

Okin, Susan Moller. "Feminism and Multiculturalism: Some Tensions." *Ethics* 108 (1998): 661-684.

Orwin, Clifford. "Charles Taylor's Pedagogy of Recognition." *Canadian Political Philosophy: Contemporary Reflections*. Ed. Ronald Beiner and Wayne Norman. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. 232-245.

Petter, Andrew. "Legalise this: The Chartering of Canadian Politics." *Contested Constitutionalism*. Ed. James B. Kelley and Christopher Manfredi. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2009. 33-49.

Phillips, Anne. *The Politics of Presence: Issues in Democracy and Group Representation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Quebec. *The Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences: Final Report*. (Online). Montréal*:* Gouvernement du Québec, 2008. <http://www.accommodements.qc.ca/documentation/rapports/rapport-final-integral-en.pdf> [August 10, 2009]

R. A. V. v. City of St. Paul, 505 U.S. 377 (1992).

R. v. Keegstra, [1990] 3 S.C.R. 697.

Rawls, John. *Political Liberalism: Expanded Edition*. 2nd ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

---. *A Theory of Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971.

Raz, Joseph. "Multiculturalism: A Liberal Perspective." *Dissent* 41 (1994): 67–79.

Re: Resolution to amend the Constitution, [1981] 1 S.C.R. 753.

Redhead, Mark. *Charles Taylor: Thinking and Living Deep Diversity*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002.

---. "Charles Taylor's Deeply Diverse Response to Canadian Fragmentation: A Project Often Commented On but Seldom Explored." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 36 (2003): 61-83.

Sandel, Michael. *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

---. "A Response to Rawls' Political Liberalism." *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. 184-218.

Shklar, Judith N. "Review of Sources of the Self." *Political Theory* 19 (1991): 105-109.

Skinner, "Modernity and Disenchantment: some historical reflections." *Philosophy in an Age of Pluralism: The Philosophy of Charles Taylor in Question*. Ed. James Tully. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. 37-48.

---. "'Who are we?' Ambiguities of the modern self." *Inquiry* 34 (1991): 133-153.

Spinner, J., *The Boundaries of Citizenship: Race, Ethnicity and Nationality in the Liberal State*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.

Statistics Canada. 2006. *Immigration in Canada: A Portrait of the Foreign-born Population, 2006 Census: Findings*. Statistics Canada Catalogue 97-557-XIE2006001. Ottawa. Version updated May 2009. Ottawa. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/12-591-x/12-591-x2009001-eng.htm> [January 10, 2010]

Tamir, Yael. *Liberal Nationalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Taylor, Charles. "Afterword: Apologia pro Libro suo." *Varieties of Secularism in a Secular Age.* Ed., Michael Warner, Jonathan Van Antwerpen and Craig Calhoun. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010. 300-321.

---. "Alternative Futures: Legitimacy, Identity, and Alienation in Late-Twentieth-Century Canada." *Reconciling the Solitudes: Essays in Canadian Federalism and Nationalism*. Ed. Guy Laforest. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993. 59-119.

---. "Can Liberalism Be Communitarian?" *Critical Review* 8 (1994): 257-262.

---. *A Catholic Modernity? Charles Taylor's Marianist Award Lecture, with responses by William M. Shea, Rosemary Luling Haughton, George Marsden, and Jean Bethke Elshtain*. Ed. James L Heft. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

---. "Comment on Jürgen Habermas' 'From Kant to Hegel and Back Again.'" *European Journal of Philosophy* 7 (1999): 158–163

---. “Comments and Replies.” *Inquiry* 34 (1991): 237-254.

---. “Comparison, History, Truth.” *Philosophical Arguments*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995. 146-164.

---. “Cross-Purposes: The liberal-communitarian debate.” *Philosophical Arguments*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995. 181-203.

---. *The Ethics of Authenticity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.

---. “From Philosophical Anthropology to the Politics of Recognition: An Interview with Philippe de Lara.” *Thesis Eleven* 52 (1998): 103-12.

---. “Overcoming Epistemology.” *Philosophical Arguments*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995. 1-19.

---. “The Politics of Recognition.” *Multiculturalism and the “Politics of Recognition.”* Ed. Gutmann, Amy. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992. 25–73.

---. Preface. *Philosophical Arguments*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995. i-xii.

---. "The Rushdie Controversy." *Public Culture* 2 (1989): 118-22.

---. *A Secular Age*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2007.

---. “Shared and Divergent Values.” *Reconciling the Solitudes: Essays in Canadian Federalism and Nationalism*. Ed. Guy Laforest. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993. 155-186.

---. *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.

---. "Two Theories of Modernity." *Hastings Center Report* 25.2 (1995), 24-33.

---. “Understanding and Ethnocentricity.” *Philosophy and the Human Sciences: Philosophical Papers 2*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. 116-133.

Temelini, Michael. “Multicultural Rights, Multicultural Virtues.” Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007. Ed. Stephen Tierney. *Multiculturalism and the Canadian Constitution*. 43-60.

Trudeau, Pierre Elliott. "New Treason of the Intellectuals." *Federalism and the French Canadians*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1968. 151-81.

---. "Quebec and the Constitutional Problem." *Federalism and the French Canadians*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1968. 3-51.

Warner, Michael, Jonathan VanAntwerpen, and Craig Calhoun. Editor's Introduction. *Varieties of Secularism in a Secular Age*. Ed. Michael Warner, Jonathan VanAntwerpen, and Craig Calhoun. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010. 1-31.

Weinrib, Lorraine. "The Canadian Charter's Transformative Aspirations." *The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms: Reflections on the Charter After Twenty Years*. Ed. Joseph Magnet, Gerald-A. Beaudoin, Gerald Gall, and Christopher Manfredi. Toronto: Butterworths, 2003. 17-37.

Wisconsin v. Yoder, 406 U.S. 205 (1972).

Wolf, Susan. "Comment." *Multiculturalism and the "Politics of Recognition."* Ed. Amy Gutmann. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992. 75-85.

Young, Iris Marion. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.